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Sea Angler

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BASS
RECORD
SMASHED**

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of historic
catch

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WELCOME

Sea Angler Issue 582 On sale April 2 – April 29

HAVE BATTLE LINES BEEN DRAWN IN SEA ANGLING? Newcomer Fishery Watch looks to be moving in on the territory occupied by the Angling Trust.

Of course, Fishery Watch, the new kid on the block, claims it is not a rival to the Angling Trust, but its founder has inside knowledge of the workings of the national body at a top level.

Fishery Watch does appear to be parking on the lawn of the Angling Trust and feels there are lots of issues that affect sea fishing that need addressing. It has even pushed its case on a radio angling show.

Being a totally independent body, it is run by an expanding group of dedicated volunteers committed to protecting the future of angling, and it prides itself on being transparent.

It believes the sea angling community does not receive half the support of coarse fishing, which benefits from revenue from a rod licence. It says sea angling suffers from more regulations and therefore needs more support. It wants to take a different approach and create a positive presence in the angling community to protect our fishing.

Like the Angling Trust, it says it can help with legal matters and pollution. It will provide online training in areas relating to fishing, and plans a coastal clean-up scheme. While the Angling Trust charges for membership, the other offers its services for free. It remains to be seen if its claims will be backed up with actions and if it gains support. You can't knock the enthusiasm in trying to make a difference.

LAYING DOWN THE LAW

One of my correspondents says things are moving in the right direction to curtail the taking of immature bass at the warm-water discharge outlet at Torness Nuclear Power Station in East Lothian. He told me that for many years, so-called 'anglers' had allegedly taken multiple undersized bass that are supposedly sold to restaurants and fish shops.

A new sign, which explains the law in a multiple languages, has appeared. Two fishery officers from Marine Scotland arrived on patrol when my informant was there. This, they claimed, was a regular occurrence, along with visits by the police from Eyemouth and Dunbar. Contact details are shown on the sign, should anyone see illegal practices.

RECORD BASS

In the last issue I mentioned a record boat bass and the fact that it would never be an official record because it was returned. Now we report on a shore-caught fish that smashed the record too. Again, the fish was returned. Read about it from page 37.

Meanwhile, while we may be out of our office for some time, we will do our best to maintain our regular service. *Cliff Brown, editor*

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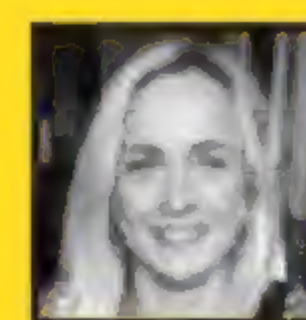
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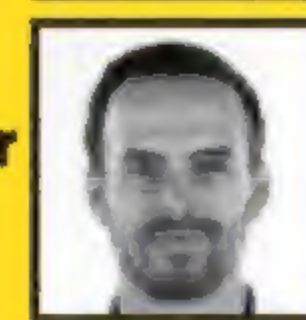
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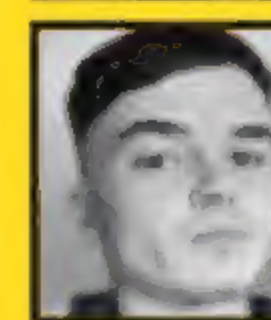
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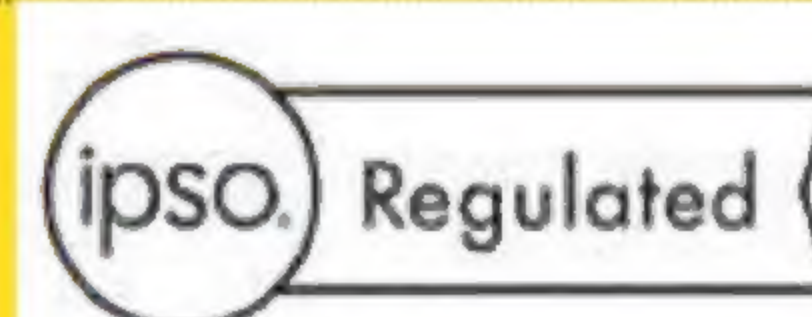
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There's life after cod...

Kent's famous shingle beaches used to attract hordes of anglers wanting to catch old bucket mouth, but now the targets have changed considerably...



T MUST HAVE BEEN THE WINTER OF 1980, where I recall opening up an issue of Sea Angler magazine. A large black and white photo of a shore angler holding up a brace of cod, each weighing in excess of 20lb, along with another four double-figure specimens laid out in front of him, sent me into dreamland.

It was dark, and the angler, on his knees, looked particularly shattered in his woollen hat, fingerless gloves and oilskin jacket. A couple of Tilley lamps burned brightly around him, and even though the photo was grainy, it gave the impression of being icy-cold amid glistening shingle.

This was Dungeness in its glory days, an absolute magnet for those seeking huge cod from the beach that many still today regard as hallowed ground. It was pictures like this that inspired me, and I guess many others too, to go out into a gale on a winter's night chasing cod.

Sadly, I was just too young to remember the great Les Moncrieff, but I'd certainly heard all the stories behind this great shore angler. For me, it was anglers like Terry Carroll and John Darling who I would look up to. These

angling greats all had one thing in common... they were great beach anglers and regularly bagged huge cod from Kent's famous shingle. Our sport certainly lacks inspirational modern-day heroes like these, that's for sure.

ALL IS NOT LOST

Nowadays, those cod are long-gone, with perhaps the odd stray fish falling to a baited hook. There are many theories behind why the once-prevalent shoals have now declined into non-existence in Kent.

Some say that rising water temperatures are to blame. Many others reckon that commercial trawlers have decimated the stocks into almost oblivion in the south-eastern section of the English Channel.

However, every cloud has a silver lining and all is not lost as far as shore fishing is concerned. When one dominant species disappears, others will subsequently move in and take over. The arrival of thornback rays, plaice and smoothhounds at many venues in Kent certainly proves this.

Once more, local shore anglers have at least hope again of a bend in the rod, even if it isn't from one of those bearded unicorns. ►



Flashback: Alan Yates
with a rare codling from
Samphire Hoe



SANDWICH BAY

Located just north of Deal, this is a long stretch of shingle that used to provide anglers with good catches of cod in the winter. Nowadays, it's more recognised for targeting thornback rays and smoothhounds from spring and into summer. Soles offer good sport in the summer months too.

Once the autumn whiting arrive, there's also a good chance of catching bass in rough conditions, or by using a livebait in darkness and extremely close to the shore.

Best baits for rays are Bluey, mackerel, herring and squid, while live peeler crabs are needed for the better smoothhounds. Small lug, rag and harbour rag will attract soles, and possibly flounders and dabs.

SAMPHIRE HOE

Constructed from the spoil leftover after the Channel Tunnel was constructed, this long concrete promenade offers comfortable fishing into large boulders and kelp.

Species such as codling, pollack and wrasse can provide much of the action. In summer, float-fishing is outstanding for garfish and mackerel and on the bottom for smoothhounds. Best baits are ragworms, sandeels and peeler crabs and there is a small charge to fish the venue.

Expect thornback
rays all year round



It's comfortable
fishing from the
promenade at
Samphire Hoe



"Some say global warming forced the cod to move away - I'm not buying it"

ALAN YATES IS A FORMER ENGLAND shore international and made his name winning hundreds of matches on the Kent coastline. The former Sea Angler contributor offers his personal views on how shore fishing has evolved in his home county.

"Shore fishing in Kent has changed dramatically during the last 20 years, and it's overwhelmingly noticeable. During the 1980s and into the early '90s, Kent was certainly famous for its winter cod.

"Venues such as Sandown, Deal and, of course, Dungeness, would regularly produce large catches of cod, especially during or just after a south-westerly gale. Many of these fish were of a good size too, with plenty pushing into double figures, along with a sprinkling of magical 20-pounders beached too.

"When spring and summer arrived, we enjoyed hectic sessions catching big eels or targeting a large mullet on a calm evening - even flounders were plentiful. Nowadays, though, the seasons and species in Kent have taken on a totally new look.

"Summer is now regarded as Kent's dominant season for catching decent fish. Dogfish and whiting are at plague proportions, while thornback rays and smoothhounds provide the bulk of the action, with anglers

regularly bagging several during a session. For those who like catching plaice, spring now brings bumper catches, and many of these tasty flatties run to over 3lb.

"Even in winter, thornback rays are regularly caught, which sort of makes up for the lack of cod. Bass are also around in good numbers, with plenty of schoolies landed, plus the occasional bonus double-figure specimen too.

"Dabs pretty much thinned out over the last few years, but even these are beginning to show signs of being plentiful again, especially at Dungeness.

"I've heard so many theories why shore anglers believe that cod have been replaced by these other species. Some say that global warming is to blame and has forced the cod to move away, but I'm not buying it. Perhaps the water temperature has indeed risen slightly, but to think this would contribute to a single species disappearing is something I find extremely hard to believe. Commercial pressure from British and foreign trawlers is more than likely the true culprit.

"I would love to see the cod shoals return to Kent, and you never know, they just might. In the meantime, I'm pinning my hopes on a 20lb smoothhound or a 10lb bass, and if I catch a cod, you'll definitely hear me cheering...I might even smile."

YOUR VIEWS

RICHARD SMITH

Richard lives in Ashford, Kent.



"I think the theory on global warming is spot-on. The sea temperature around the Kent coast has stayed warmer than usual over the last

few months. There have definitely been more bass and thornback rays around. I have only seen a handful of reports of codling. One of the venues which I visit regularly has hundreds of razorfish exposed over low water."

DAN TOWNSEND

Dan lives in Ramsgate, Kent.

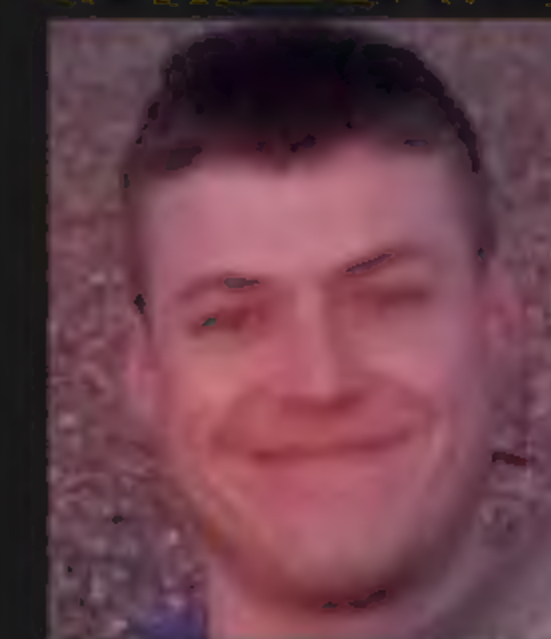


"I fish at Sandwich, Herne Bay and Beltinge, where I catch plenty of big smoothhounds and rays but no cod. I've only been fishing

for six years and it was very rare to catch a thornback ray when I first started, but now we catch them throughout the year. I believe the water temperature has certainly made an impact on the fishing. As for cod, unless you fish the Admiralty Pier at Dover, you will hardly see one. Dungeness was certainly the hotspot for cod, but not so much any more."

JONDA MACKENZIE

Jonda lives in Dover, Kent



"I'm 31 years old and have been fishing since I was a kid. I think cod have been overfished by anglers and boats. We see a lot more bass and rays

from Kent nowadays, plus whiting and dogfish. Monster smoothhounds are regularly caught here too."

CRAIG COLLINS

owns Channel Angling tackle shop in Dover, Kent



"I think the sea temperature has increased and it has become much cleaner. I talk to a lot of guys and they all agree the decline

in cod catches is down to this. The sewage outfalls are now further out, which means the mussel beds are further out too. For instance, at the Admiralty pier there used to be lots of plaice caught, but the sewage outfall was moved offshore and the plaice suddenly disappeared. Rays and smoothhounds find the crabs and shrimps, but cod need cold water. Local divers tell me the wrecks are devoid of fish too. This is down to overfishing in the 1970s and '80s."

DYMCHURCH

This venue can be fished from the promenade at high water, or from the beach at low tide. Codling and whiting are caught during the winter months, but summer is when this venue really comes alive.

Thornback rays and smoothhounds offer great sport, but recently there have been reports of blonde rays being caught.

Bass are also possible if it's rough. Calm conditions after a blow are considered the best time to fish here with fishbaits and peeler crabs.



Dymchurch provides lots of ray action

Fishing into darkness can be productive



HYTHE

Weekends can attract lots of match anglers, making this venue incredibly busy, especially at the Princess and Marine Parade sections. It produces quality plaice in spring and summer, and thornback rays are caught all year round.

Hotspots are close to Twiss Road and the White Shelter, where long casting on to the mud is the best tactic.

At night, there is a slight chance of a cod, but if it's rough with coloured water, the opportunity to catch a large bass is real. Winter offers some good dab and whiting fishing, while dogfish can be abundant, and some anglers regard them as a pest when targeting other species.

Best baits are lug, black lug, squid, mackerel, frozen sandeel, live peeler crabs and white rag.



“Even the charter boats haven’t caught a single cod”

Simon Newman runs Castaways Guest House overlooking Dungeness and has seen first-hand how the fishing has changed.

He explained: “From as far back as the 1960s, Dungeness has been Kent’s iconic beach for catching large cod, that is until these fish suddenly disappeared. As recently as five years ago, cod over 20lb were being caught from the shingle, plus the occasional 30lb specimen from the boat.

“I’ve caught hundreds of cod from Dungeness over the years, and four winters back I caught 28 in less than a dozen sessions. Most of these cod averaged between 7lb to 9lb, but over the last few winter seasons I haven’t heard of or seen a single cod caught from Dungeness. Even the charter boats that fish offshore haven’t caught a single cod – they simply aren’t there.

“So what exactly is going on? Even the commercial boats aren’t catching cod, and they’ve all decided to pot for whelks anyway.

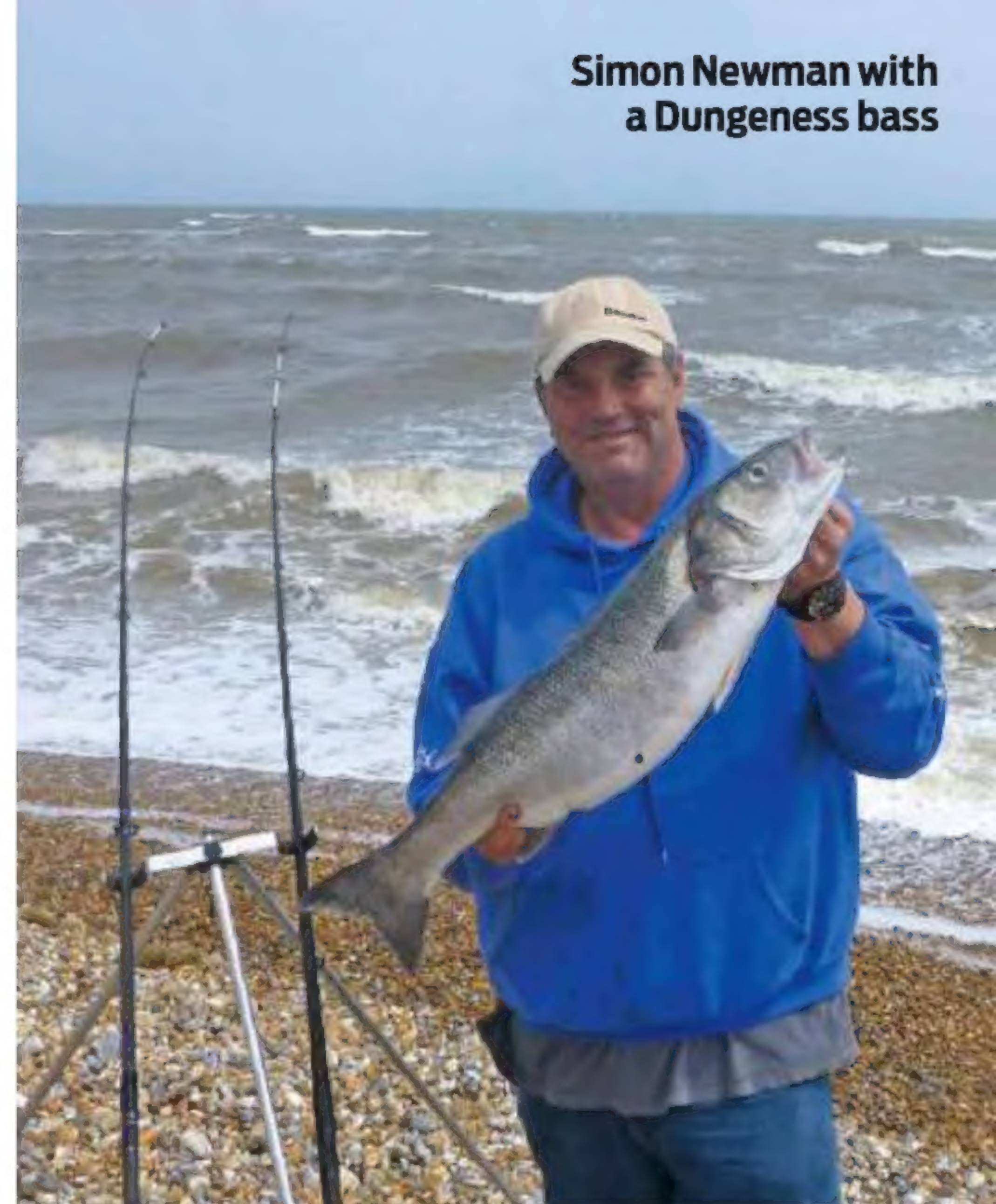
“Nowadays, the huge numbers of spider crabs are causing havoc. After around 20 minutes of a trawl, the nets are stuffed with spider crabs, pretty much destroying the

process. If it’s not the spiders, nets are now bulging with thornback rays – cod have simply been replaced by spider crabs and thornies. The Grand Banks off Newfoundland were once full of cod, and after the cod were wiped out commercially, rays took over...I can see a similarity at Dungeness.

“On the plus side, the ray fishing in Kent has been excellent. Beaches at Hythe, Dungeness and Galloways are producing some fantastic results. Also, the sole fishing has been the best I’ve ever known over the last 10 years, and I expect this summer to be just as good. Fishing for bass at Dungeness is a little under the radar, and it can be exceptional from April right the way through to November. Most of these are 4lb, but a double-figure specimen can turn up at any time.

“Another phenomenon that has recently occurred at Dungeness is the amount of squid that we have been catching. I’ve actually been catching squid from the shore over the last few years and instead of drowning worms targeting cod that aren’t there, I’ve enjoyed the squid fishing, which has been superb.

“Using light rods, 4oz sinkers and squid



jigs, it’s enormous fun. You need to be super-quick to react to a bite too, and then having to carefully play them or they will simply rip themselves from the jig. The bigger ones actually put up a tremendous fight, and often the reel drag needs to be slackened. Not only that, they make wonderful eating too.

“Finally, to sum up Dungeness I can pretty much guarantee you will never blank here. It’ll probably be a whiting, dabs, pout, flounders, soles, eels, dogfish, bass, rays, smoothhounds, plaice, or even a little rockling. But I bet it won’t be a cod, and not for the foreseeable future either. Could squid be the new cod? I say bring on the Humboldt!”

DUNGENESS

Once renowned for producing huge winter cod over 20lb, the main target species now varies from bass, plaice, flounders, soles and dabs. Hordes of dogfish and whiting can be frustrating when trying to target other species, so it’s always worth using two rods with different baits and rigs.

Local lugworms, known as ‘Dungie blacks’, are an outstanding bait to use and will certainly attract most species. After a storm, plenty of shellfish such as

razorfish, clams and cockles plus sprats can be washed on to the beach. These can easily be collected to use as bait.

Darkness may produce a large bass, especially with a livebait presented just a few feet from the edge.

The water is deep and the tides can be fierce, and fixed-wire grip leads may be needed. Adding to that, line snags due to lost tackle can also be a huge problem, along with crowds of anglers at weekends.

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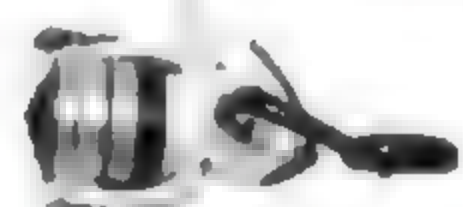
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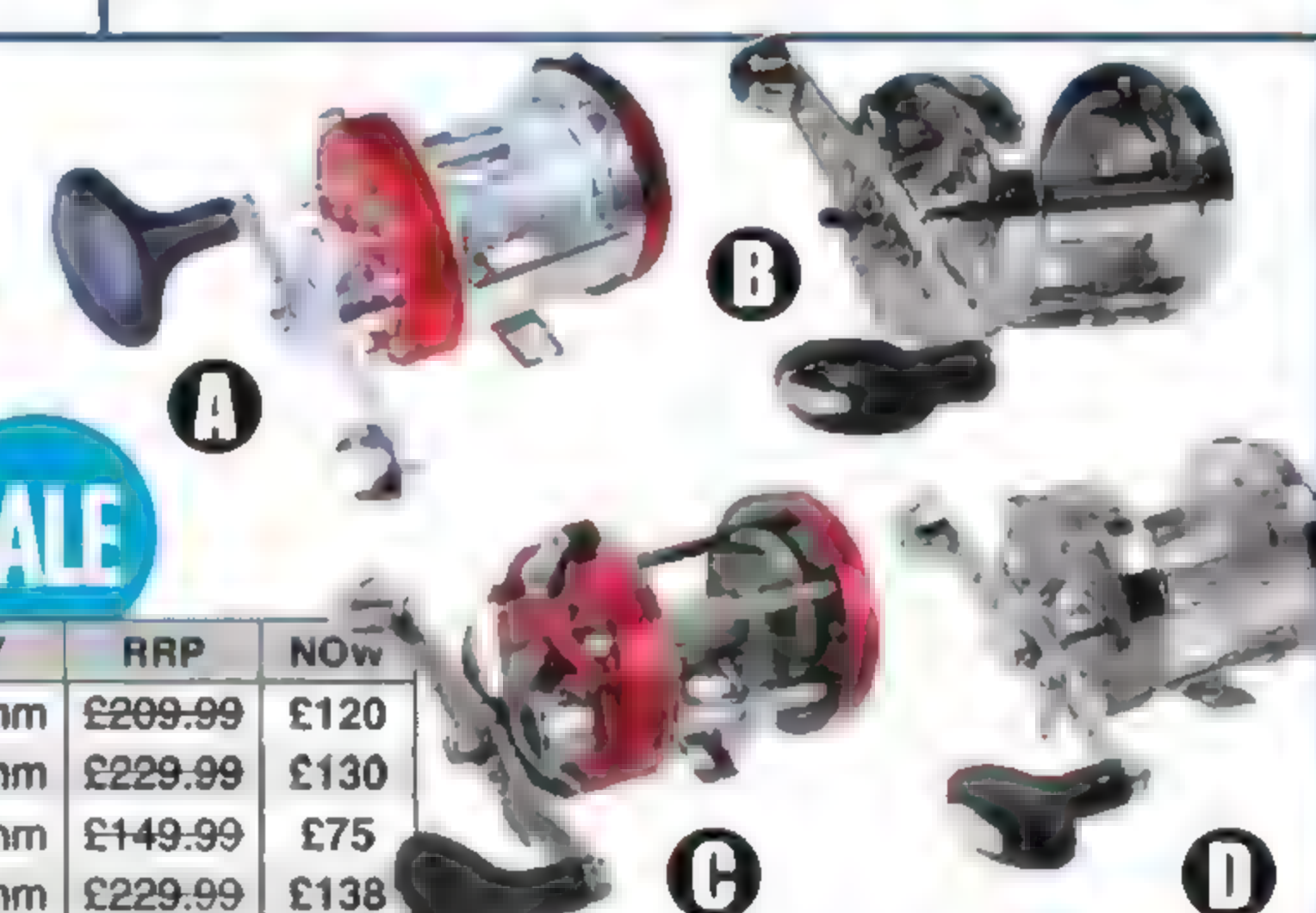
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D PU1514	6500C3 CT	200m/0.40mm	£229.99	£138



SALE

Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch Beach Rods

Probably one of the best all round shore rods Century has ever produced.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0180	13ft 6	4-7oz	£499.00

Eliminator T900 Guide Rod

Features Century's STF (spread tow fabric) to improve AT-T anti-twist.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0114	14ft 4	4-7oz	£549.00

Visit our website to see the full range!

TRONIXPRO Apex Continental TT

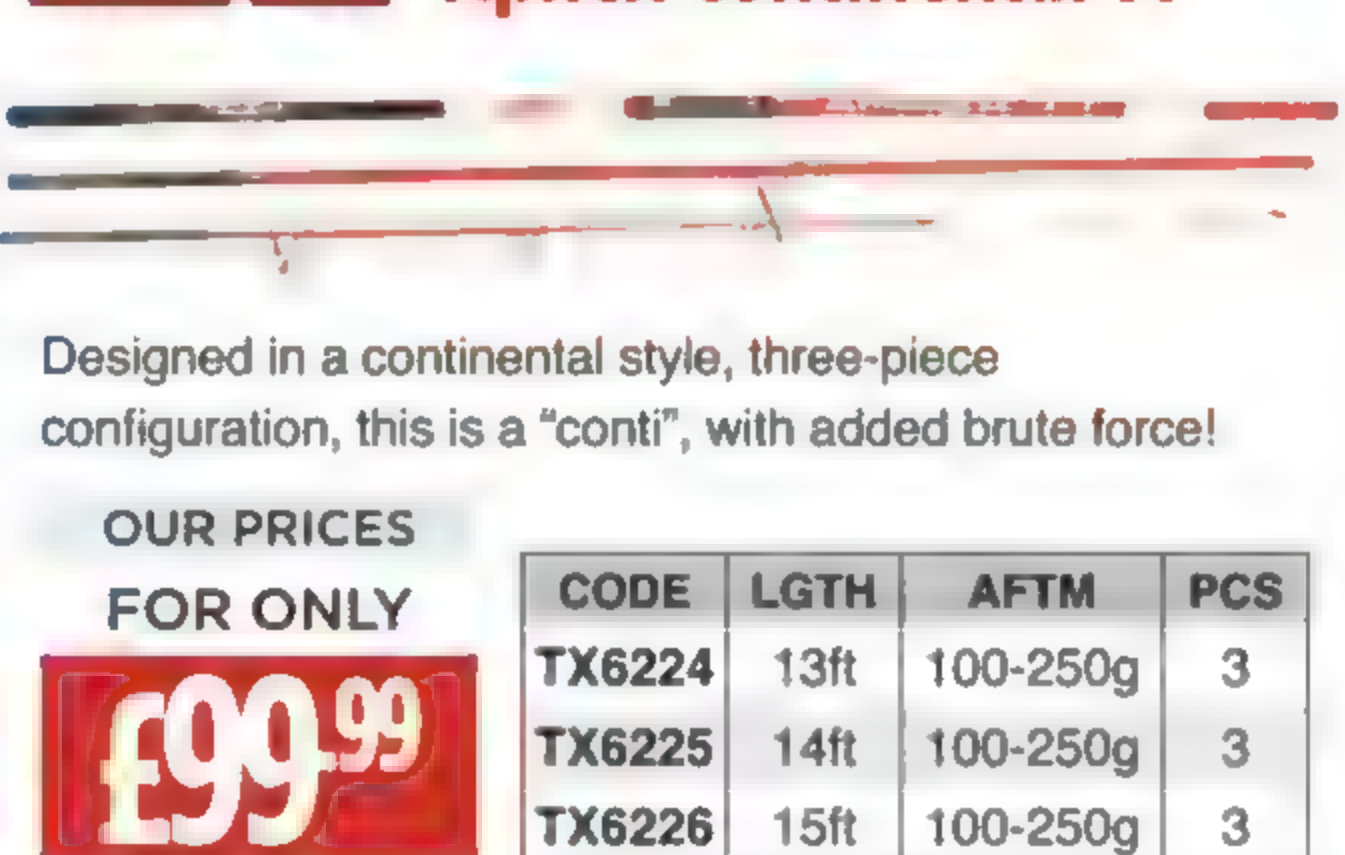
Designed in a continental style, three-piece configuration, this is a "conti", with added brute force!

CODE	LGTH	AFTM	PCS
TX6224	13ft	100-250g	3
TX6225	14ft	100-250g	3
TX6226	15ft	100-250g	3

OUR PRICES

FOR ONLY

£99.99



TRONIXPRO Envoy 7000 FS Reel

Lightweight, powerful and reliable, the Envoy Fixed Spool from Tronixpro is the ideal partner for continental style surf rods, letting you cast to the horizon every time. Features a grippy rubberised handle, lightweight frame, infinite anti-reverse and a powerful drag that'll stop anything that swims. The high capacity spool is built to hold all line you'll need if your catch heads for the horizon.

CODE	CAPACITY
TX4268	20lb/230yd

RRP £54.99

OUR PRICE

£45



SALE

SONIK Vader XS Shore Rods

Superb multi modulus carbon fibre two piece blanks with progressive casting action, with sensitive hi-vis tips for bite detection.

CODE	MODEL	PRICE
SO0622	13ft 2pc 4-6oz	£54.99
SO0623	14ft 2pc 4-7oz	£64.99
SO0624	15ft 3pc 4-7oz	£79.99

OUR PRICES

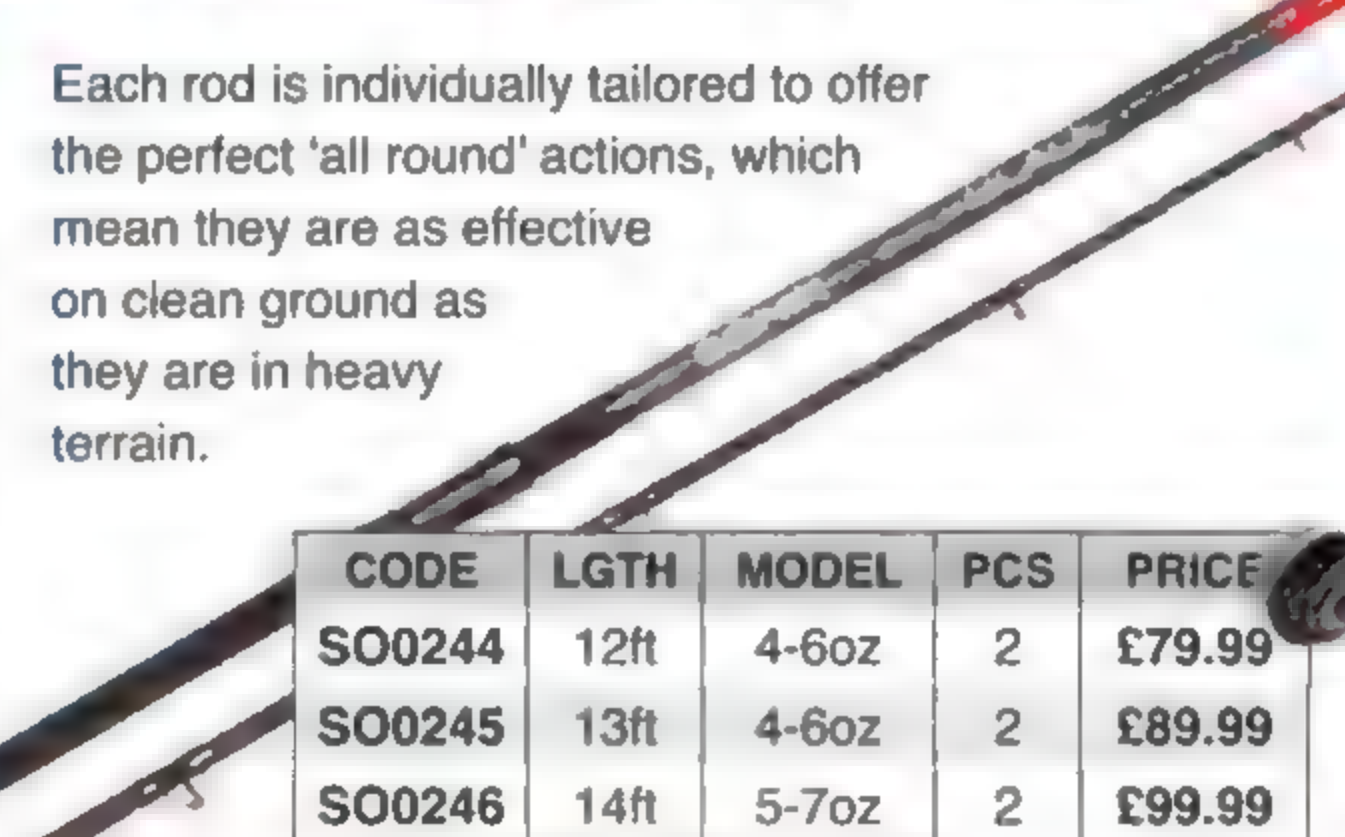
FROM ONLY

£54.99

SONIK SKS Black Shore Rods

Each rod is individually tailored to offer the perfect 'all round' actions, which mean they are as effective on clean ground as they are in heavy terrain.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PCS	PRICE
SO0244	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0245	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0246	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99



PENN GS 525 MAG3 Series

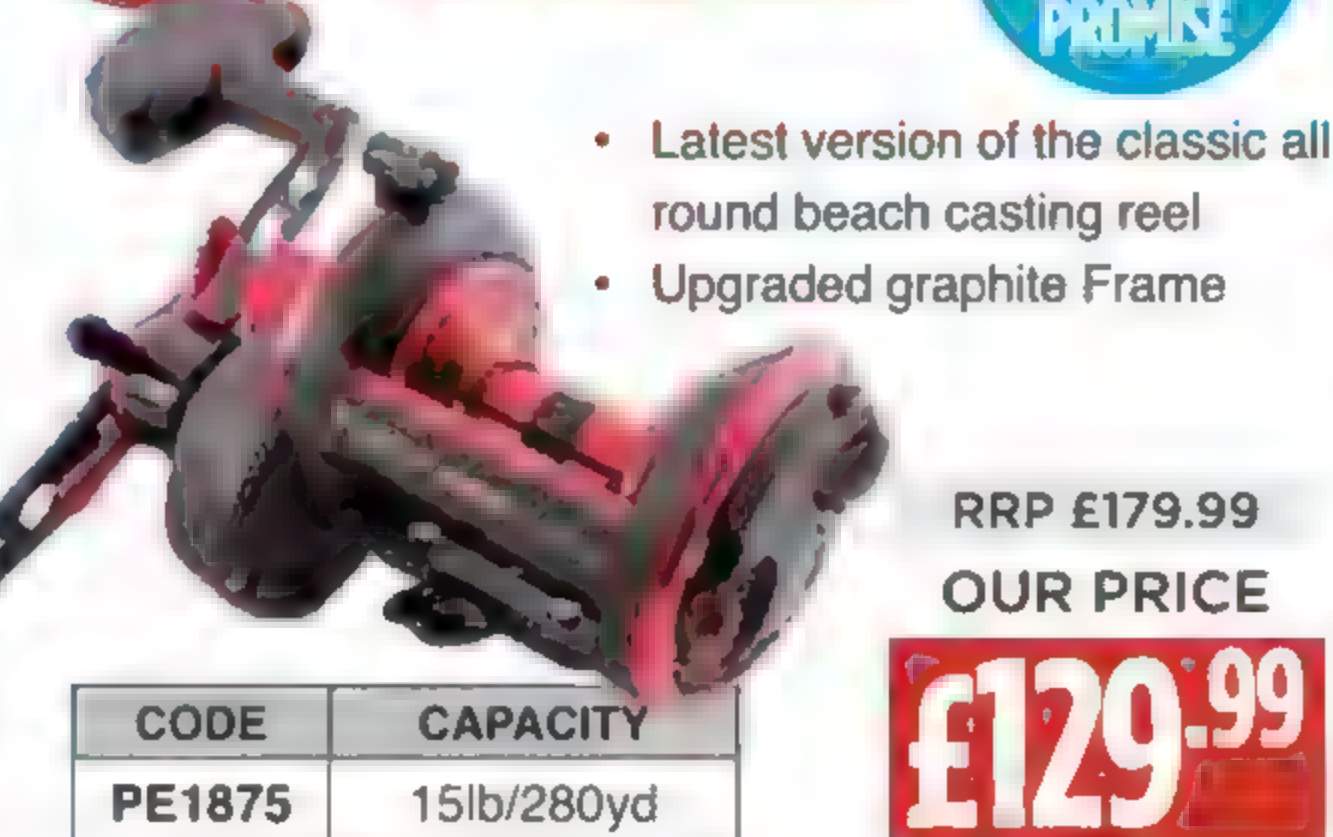
- Latest version of the classic all round beach casting reel
- Upgraded graphite frame

CODE	CAPACITY
PE1875	15lb/280yd

RRP £179.99

OUR PRICE

£129.99



PENN Surfblaster II Fixed Spool Reel

Ideal for all surf-casting situations over clean and mixed rough ground.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	PRICE
PE1777	7000	330yds/15lb	£109.99	£90.00
PE1778	8000	370yds/15lb	£114.99	£95.00



Shakespeare Ugly Stik GX2 Boat Rods

- Ugly Tech blank construction
- Long tip-Short butt design
- Ugly Stik's famous Clear Tip
- Laser etched EVA foregrip
- 2 piece construction

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
SP3846	7ft 4 8-12lb	£74.99	£70.00
SP3446	7ft 9 12-20lb	£59.99	£55.00
SP3447	7ft 6 20-30lb	£64.99	£60.00
SP3448	7ft 4 30-50lb	£69.99	£65.00



PENN Warfare Combo

The PENN Warfare combo was engineered to be an extremely versatile all-round combo at an affordable price. It features a lightweight reel with graphite frame and sideplates in combination with a strong composite rod.

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
PE1795	7ft 20 LW	£109.99	£90
PE1796	7ft 30 LW	£109.99	£100
PE1794	7ft 30 LW Left Hand	£109.99	£100



PENN Fierce III Reels

Featuring a full metal body and sideplate along with PENN HT-100™ carbon fiber drag washers, the Fierce III can handle anything inshore or nearshore.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RATIO	NOW
PE1953	2500	240yds/10lb	6.2:1	£79.99
PE1955	3000	250yds/15lb	6.2:1	£84.99
PE1956	4000	360yds/15lb	6.2:1	£89.99
PE1958	5000	420yds/20lb	5.6:1	£94.99
PE1959	6000	490yds/30lb	5.6:1	£99.99
PE1961	8000	475yds/50lb	5.3:1	£109.99



SHIMANO Speedmaster 14000 XSC

The new version of the 2015 Speecast, strongly updated in specs, features and appearance

SU14166

OUR PRICE

£120

CAPACITY

8kg/400m



NEW

Leeda M-Sport Elite Beach Rods

The M-Sport Elite range is complete with new additions and improvements to the original M-Sport range. Key improvements on these rods are the Fuji components, glass tips, the compatibility to include a reducer, improved construction with carbon composite.

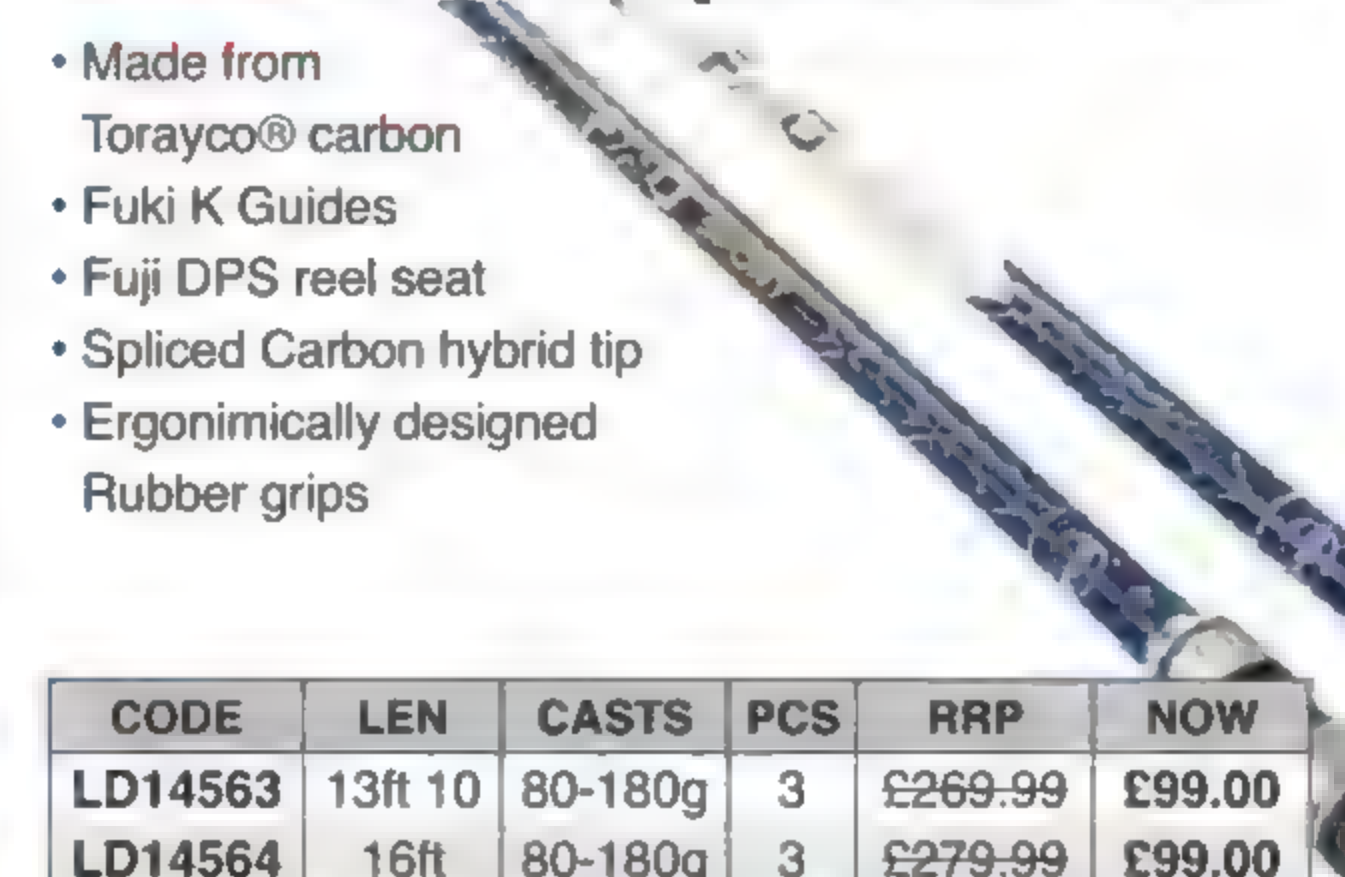
CODE	LGTH	CASTS	RRP	OUR PRICE
LD14559	13ft10	3.5-6oz	£209.99	£140
LD14560	13ft10	4-7oz		
LD14561	13ft10	4-8oz		



Leeda ICON FXD Sport Beach Rods

- Made from Torayco® carbon
- Fuji K Guides
- Fuji DPS reel seat
- Spliced Carbon hybrid tip
- Ergonomically designed Rubber grips

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
LD14563	13ft 10	80-180g	3	£269.99	£99.00
LD14564	16ft	80-180g	3	£279.99	£99.00



DAIWA Sealine Slos Multipliers

The SL20SH and SL30SH are two top drawer performers boasting powerful, high speed gearing.

RRP £160.00

OUR PRICE

£79.99

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY
DW0631	SL20SH	250m/20lbs
DW0633	SL30SH	300m/20lbs



Abu Garcia Cardinal Salt Water Reels

Stainless steel components are matched with four high performance corrosion resistant bearings, couple this with serious winding power and you have the complete saltwater reel.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU2599	174	0.28mm/190m	£47.99	£36.99
PU2600	176	0.35mm/220m	£49.99	£42.99
PU2601	177	0.35mm/300m	£59.99	£49.99





Culture club

With big money on offer, the nation's largest match certainly draws the crowds, but it's never all about the cash



SAND LE MERE HOLIDAY VILLAGE at Tunstall was quiet. The revelry that had kept anglers in the bar until the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings was but a sore-headed memory – for those who could remember.

A few battle-hardened staff busied themselves with preparations for the last evening's onslaught, while the receptionist gave a cheery greeting and what appeared a weary smile.

Once again, the European Open Beach Championships had taken over the sprawling static caravan site on the clifftops at Tunstall.

An amazing 330 anglers had competed in the Flattie Bash, the Friday's zoned warm-up event for the EOBC. Winner was Craig Lenette, of Millom SAC, who topped zone B with 30 fish for 603 points.

There were 1,300, an increase on last year's total, entered in the main two-day event. Saturday had fished well. Hopes were high.

With fishing held between Bridlington and Spurn, the anglers had made their way to their chosen venues in time for the 9am start of the final day. Some had saved their energy by having an early night, but others had only a few hours' sleep. The "I will survive" mantra is part of the culture at the Euro.

While many enjoy the event's social side, tackle stands and post-match socialising, they

might not admit it but they're all hopeful of catching that one big fish that could get them a £2,000 day win, or even among the many prizes. Even more lucrative is the overall championship, which is decided by the best two-day aggregate, comprising of each entrant's heaviest fish from each day and is worth £4,000.

Set up by the late Paul Roggemann in 1994 as the Bridlington Open Beach Championship, it eventually became the EOBC. After his passing in 2015, it was renamed the Paul Roggemann EOBC. His widow Tezina is still involved with the organisation with the staff of East Yorkshire Events, and is popular presence among the many anglers who return year after year.

PLAYING THE LOTTERY

Down on Tunstall's sandy beach, the sun was shining, but the wind had stirred the sea to produce murky coloured water. It looked good for fish. The previous day had produced plenty of whiting, codling, bass and flatfish, with some thornback rays too.

As far as the eye could see, both north and south, anglers were busying themselves. Here was a mixture of experienced EOBC competitors who fish the event year after year, along with newcomers, and even coarse anglers who do some sea fishing throughout the year, sometimes only at this event.

A quick glimpse at the tackle suggested a varied range of budget to top-end kit. Gear, however, doesn't matter here. It's all about taking part. This contest could be anyone's to win, and it's fair to say the Euro is a lottery because luck really does play a part. It's why the EOBC attracts so many anglers and its entry total is head and shoulders above any other single sea angling event.

First person to greet the Sea Angler team was Stephen Hutchinson, of North Eastern Railway AC, who was fishing in almost the same spot as last year. While I chatted to Stephen and his pals, my colleague Paul Fenech spotted Darryl Nicholas, from Kent, land a bass. At 41cm, it was short of the 45cm minimum, did not count and was returned.

Soon we came across an old friend, Tony Burman, who would later catch a bass on lug and rag. As he was singing the praises of his new Akios F-15 Nitron reel, he was interrupted by a phone call to Paul from Brett Bartrum, who was fishing between Holmpton and Old Hives. "The lad who was second yesterday has just caught a codling of nearly 4lb," he said. He'd send a photo. Minutes later the picture arrived, and it showed Irish matchman Troy Francis, from Killarney, who I'd first met at our Penn Sea League final in 2018.

I knew Troy had won his zone in the Friday Flattie Bash at Hornsea, was second on Saturday and topped the Saturday pairs ►



A superb 1,300 anglers entered the main event



Stephen McLoughlin with a codling



Tony Burman caught a bass on lug and rag



Darryl Nicholas returned this 41cm bass



event with Mike Fox, of Withernsea, who he'd met at an Irish Pairs event. Later at the weigh-in, his Sunday fish would register 1720g (3.791lb). He was, it seemed, the man to beat.

Soon I came across Scott Oliphant, of South Shields. It was good to put a face to a name because we had spoken before on the phone and by email. The EOBC is certainly a way to catch up with other anglers.

By midday the tide was stronger and there was some weed in the water at Tunstall, which meant those on the beaches further south could be really troubled by it and might be forced to move elsewhere. Slowly but surely over the next two hours or so the anglers were being pushed up against the mud cliffs before some had to retreat to the clifftops, where many would fish the remaining time before the 3pm finish.

ANXIOUS WAIT

Back at the weigh-in, a queue soon formed, with anglers carrying bags and buckets containing cod, whiting, bass, a thornback ray and even a Dover sole. One of the first was Daniel Osbourne, of Barton-upon-Humber, who had caught a 730g (1lb 9oz 10dr) fish the previous day and now weighed in a 3.07kg (6lb 12oz 4dr) thornback ray. His two-day aggregate of 3.80kg (8lb 6oz) would put him second on the day and in fourth place overall.

Rumours circulated that another local rod, Mark Colman, of Hornsea, was in with a chance of victory. He was third on the first day with a 2.875kg (6lb 5oz 6dr) ray and duly arrived at the weigh-in with a bass, caught at the Runnels. It weighed 1.310kg (2lb 14oz 3dr) to give him a 4.185kg (9lb 3oz 10dr) aggregate.

That looked like top spot for now, but somewhere in the queue was Troy Francis?

Eventually, the man they'd all been waiting for arrived. Troy removed a cod from his catch bag and it registered 1.720kg (3lb 12oz 10dr). With his first day cod of 2.90kg (6lb 6oz 4dr), it gave him a 4.620kg (10lb 2oz 15dr) aggregate. Now he was the man eyeing that £4,000 overall prize and he had cleaned up on the prize for the top overseas angler too. A carpenter working in property maintenance, Troy first fished the EOBC three years ago, but hadn't caught a cod in his first two visits to the East Yorkshire coast. Now all he could do was wait.

Soon it was Ricky Drew, of Withernsea, at the scales. He had fished at Outnewton and was the only angler to return with two sizeable bass, his best 1.700kg (3lb 11oz 15dr).



Peter Nelson
with a codling
at Tunstall



Winner Troy Francis with
his 3lb 12oz 10dr cod

He'd finish 14th overall and would be part of the second-placed team of four.

Brothers Mikey and William Ireson, from Easington, were next. Young Mikey had a codling, while 20-year-old William's fish registered 3.530kg (7lb 12oz 8dr). That cod, taken on black lug and squid on a pulley dropper rig at Outnewton, would be the best fish of the second day and would net the agricultural engineer a £2,000 prize. Combined with a 4.15g (14oz 10dr) fish from the first day, his 3.945kg (8lb 11oz 2dr) aggregate also secured third place overall. It could have been different because William lost a bigger fish on day two.

"After catching the first cod in the last hour at high tide, I lost a bigger one next cast. It pulled the hook," said William, a regular at the EOBC, but who missed the 2019 event.

Anticipation was high for the day's results and overall standings. Once again, the bar and dining facilities were packed, the staff were again doing a great job. The tills were busy. Everyone seemed happy.

The overall winner would be Troy Francis and he'd done it without winning on either day. It had been 11 years since anyone from outside Yorkshire and nearby had bagged the top prize. Irish eyes were smiling.

Those who'd stayed one more night at the Sand le Mere accommodation had a choice – get some sleep or catch up with friends and acquaintances. Sore heads were inevitable.

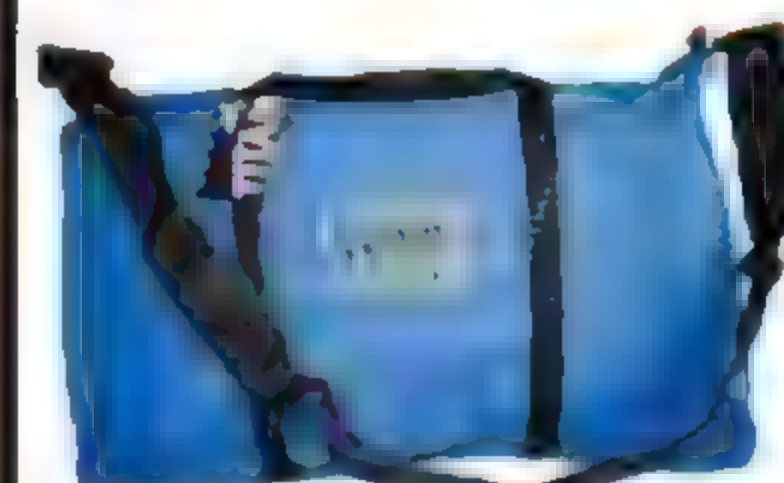
I'll leave the last word to another old friend of Sea Angler, Chris Hvass, who had his Vass waders and clothing display at the event's headquarters. "It's a culture thing and is going from strength to strength." ►

BRAND NEW TITAN RANGE

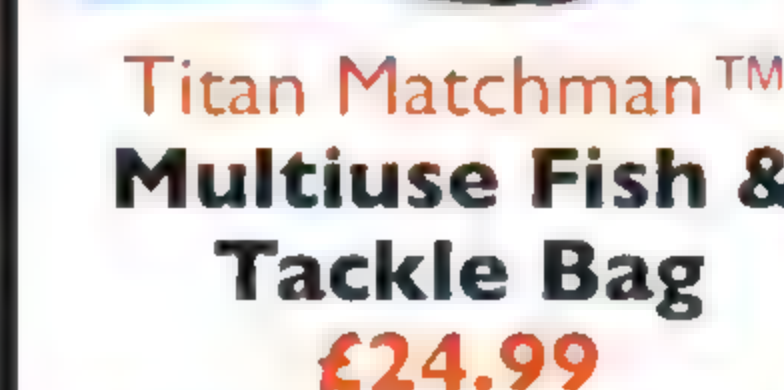
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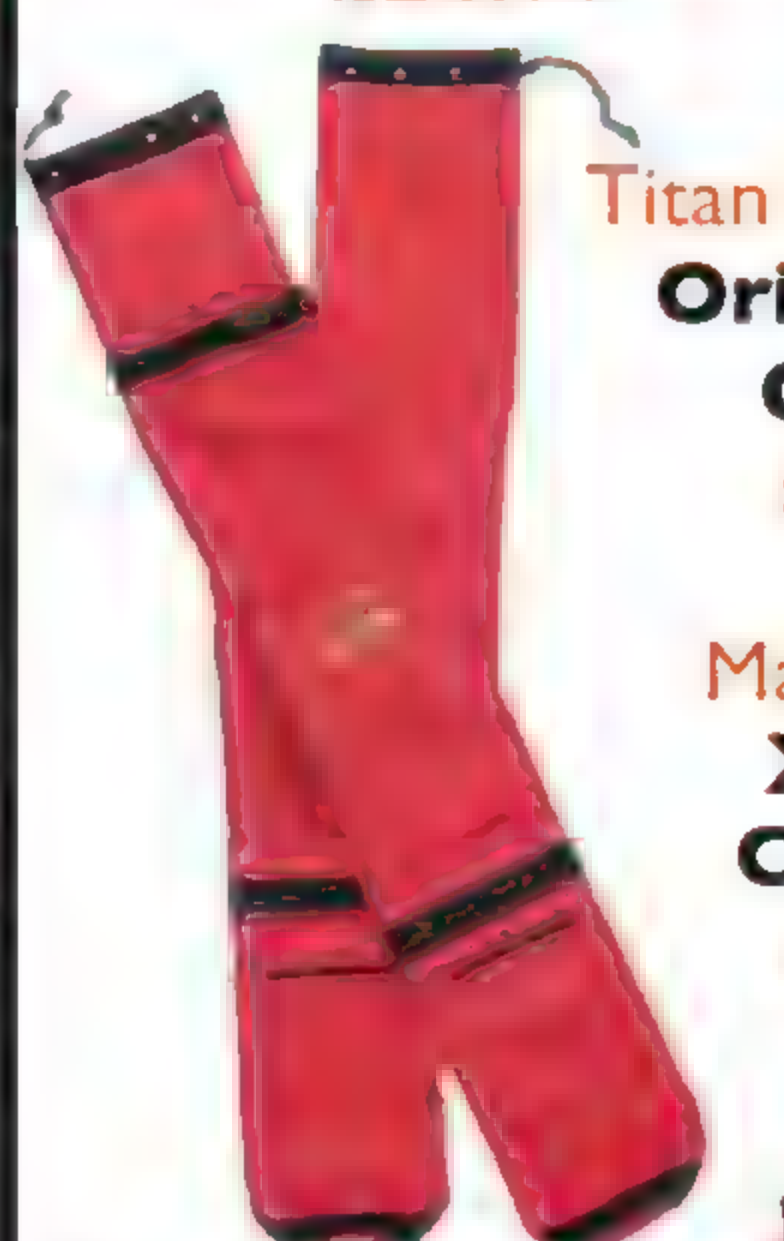


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IT'S ALL ABOUT...

■ PHIL BRISCOE, REDDITCH:

Mainly a coarse angler, who runs Larford Lakes, he said: "This is my third time, although I didn't fish last year. I do enjoy sea fishing now and again, and this event is a great chance to meet up with friends. I don't take it too seriously."



■ SHAWN WYLIE, COVENTRY:

Now working for a tyre company, Shawn served in the Army. He's fished the EOBC for many years. "It's a weekend away from the rat race, where you can speak to anyone from all walks of life and make plenty of new friends."



■ CRAIG EDWARDS, PORTSMOUTH:

Fishing the event for a sixth time, he said: "It's a big get-together where I meet up with the lads I know from all over and have a bit of a laugh. It's one big social. If you come and expect to catch, it's a big mistake."



■ MARK 'SKINNY MARK' TAYLOR, WALTHAM, NEAR GRIMSBY:

A regular on the pegged and roving match circuit, Mark has fished the event five times and was fishing with his pals Mark Perry and Ray Monro. He said: "It's a social weekend. I fished the Flattie Bash and the Sunday because I had tickets for the Grimsby v Scunthorpe derby game on Saturday. I haven't fished at Tunstall for years, but chose the easy option and fished near the accommodation today."



■ GRANT WATKINS, PETERLEE:

"It's a great event. Yes, I'm a bit lazy and fish at Tunstall because it's easy to fish, being straight out of the caravans, and seems to have some good fishing features. It's a bit of a learning curve though."



■ CHRIS STAFFORD, LONDON:

The coarse angler was sea fishing for the first time having accompanied his brother William, who lives in Edinburgh and is a keen sea angler. "I've enjoyed it. I caught a fish on the first day and am hoping to catch again today. It's really different to what I'm used to on rivers. I'll be back next year."



■ SCOTT OLIPHANT, SOUTH SHIELDS:

"The EOBC is weekend away with the lads. It's so different and a real



Ricky Drew caught two sizeable bass



Winner Troy Francis receives the trophy



Ladies winner Cheryl Robinson



The team winners collect their prizes



Pairs winners Troy Francis and Mike Fox

social gathering. I only see certain people once a year and it's here. Yes, we're all here for the competition, but it's for the enjoyment too."

RESULT

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Troy Francis, Killarney, 2.900kg Sat, 1.720kg Sun, 4.260kg; 2 Mark Colman, Hornsea, 2.875kg, 1.310kg, 4.185kg; 3 William Ineson, Easington, 0.415kg, 3.530kg, 3.945kg; 4 Daniel Osborne, Barton, 0.730kg, 3.070kg, 3.800kg; 5 Robert Whitehead, Goole, 3.000kg, 0.414kg, 3.415kg; 6 Rich Lunn, Hornsea, 2.730kg, 0.380kg, 3.110kg; 7 Mick Brockman, Hull, 1.930kg, 1.095kg, 3.025kg; 8 John Kelly, Mexborough, 2.490kg, 0.380kg, 2.870kg; 9 Ashley Turner, Immingham, 1.705kg, 1.145kg, 2.850kg; 10 Andrew Cammish, Filey, 1.645kg, 1.160kg, 2.805kg. (For Penn points - see page 106).

■ SATURDAY

1 Robert Whitehead, Goole, 3.000kg cod; 2 Troy Francis, Killarney, 2.900kg cod; 3 Mark Colman, Hornsea, 2.875kg ray.

■ SUNDAY

1 William Ineson, Easington, 3.530kg cod; 2 Daniel Osbourne, Barton, 3.070kg ray; 3 Dan Goforth, Aldbrough, 1.930kg cod.

■ SATURDAY PAIRS

1 Mike Fox & Troy Francis, 11.440kg; 2 Richard Carr & Darren Browne, 9.230kg; 3 Andrew Cammish & Mark Colling, 7.990kg.

■ SUNDAY TEAMS OF FOUR

1 Richard Carr, Darren Browne, Dave Richardson & Craig Rusling, 4.550kg; 2 Justin Hankscey, Ricky Drew, Stuart Keelty & Darren Eades, 4.165kg; 3 Phil Wight, Gavin Head, Daniel Swan & Mark Bresmen, 4.010kg.

■ HEAVIEST FLATFISH

Saturday & overall: Chris Wilson, 0.475kg. Sunday: Colin MacEachern, 0.430kg.

■ LADIES

Cheryl Robinson, Nafferton, 1.560kg.

■ JUNIORS

Saturday: Alivia Butler, Cumbria, 1.070kg. Sunday: Mikey Ineson, Easington, 1.325kg. Overall: Mikey Ineson, 1.675kg.

■ OVERSEAS

Troy Francis, Killarney, 4.620kg.

■ FLATTIE BASH

1 Craig Lenette, zone B, 603pts; 2 Stuart Fitzsimmons, B, 501; 3 Chi Cheung, B, 484. Zones - A, Darren Wilson & C, Troy Francis.



William Ineson was Sunday's winner and third overall



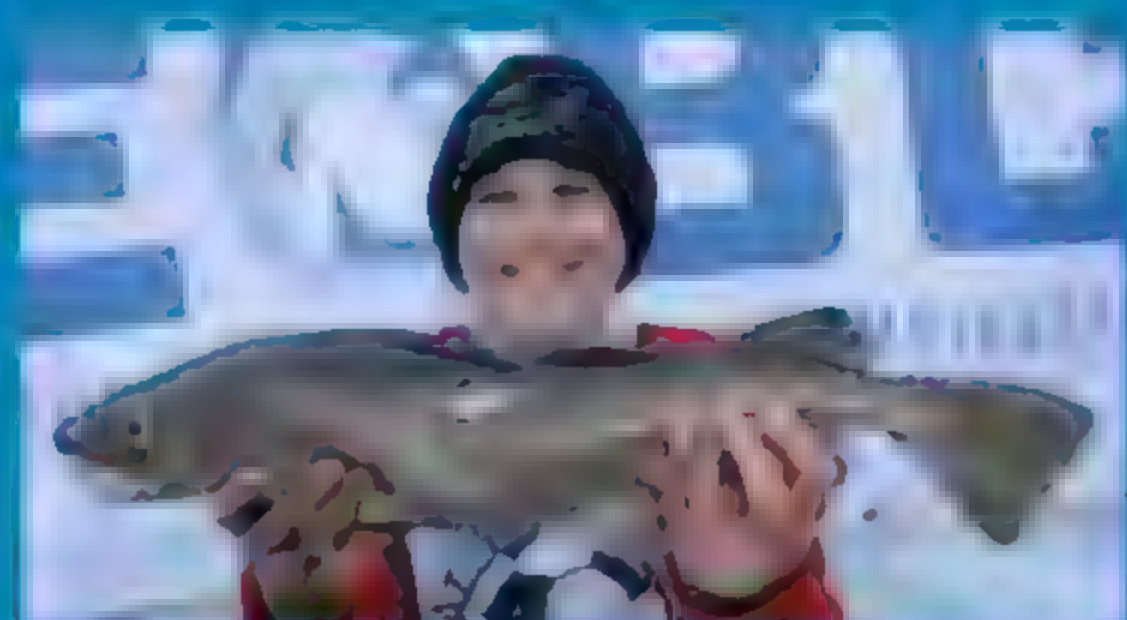
A nice cod for James Walker



A ray for Daniel Osbourne at the Sunday weigh-in



Dan Goforth finished in third spot in the Sunday placings



A fine cod gave Mikey Ineson top spot in the junior event

Vercelli

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DESPITE THE DIVERSITY OF species and range of angling on offer around Oban and the Firth of Lorn on Scotland's majestic west coast, there is one species that I enjoy targeting more than any other and that is the spurdog.

The fishing may be somewhat under the radar for many because the area is more renowned for its boat angling catches of giant skate, reaching more than 200lb. Thousands of anglers from all over the UK visit the area for the boat sport, but are unaware of the great shore fishing available and the wide variety of fish species.

These include hard-fighting pollack and ballan wrasse inhabiting the reefs and innumerable rock marks, thornback rays averaging 4-6lb and reaching 15lb from the predominantly mud bottom of the Sound of Kerrera, or large conger eels that lurk around the area's piers and rock marks.

That's not forgetting the mini species like the rock cook wrasse, sea scorpion, various gobies and hard to catch 15-spine stickleback that make the area a paradise for light rock fishing enthusiasts.

I'm happy to catch any of those species, but spurdogs are what really fire my imagination. Not only are they a type of shark, but also a hard-fighting species that makes powerful runs and puts up dogged resistance when hooked. Specimens usually average 7-8lb, with fish into double figures not uncommon. Often there are plenty to catch because they also move in packs hunting any small fish not able to find shelter. When a pack moves into an area, the fish will quickly beat the ever-present dogfish and even the thornback rays to the bait. Bites from other species, like small codling, whiting, poor cod, dabs and gurnards will suddenly stop as they swim for cover. There is no doubt that spurs are the top dogs in inshore areas around Oban.

These packs usually relate to size and

sex. The smaller males tend to remain in deeper water, further offshore and close to the bottom, while the larger females move inshore mostly at night and hunt throughout the water. Some electronically tagged females have been recorded making nightly migrations into water as shallow as five metres (16ft) and into same area to feed night after night.

These patterns of behaviour can result in some absolutely brutal fishing when packs of the larger females move inshore and hit baits hard and fast. Even a spur of average size is capable of pulling a rod and rest off the rocks if your drag is not set to give line. If an angler is using two rods, it is not uncommon to be playing a fish on one rod while getting a take on the second.

WHERE AND WHEN

Spurdogs are present in the region throughout the year and can be caught in most weather and tidal conditions, although the more

spurs

Tackle some great shore fishing on Scotland's west coast



consistent fishing is from March to the end of November. This is when the packs move with the prey species into the more stable conditions found in deeper water as sea temperatures drop. Recent studies suggest they migrate into and over winter in the upper basin of nearby Loch Etive.

They can also be targeted on rod and line from most marks, whether it be off rocks along the western coast of the Isle of Seil to the south-west, from the deep-water rock marks throughout the Sound of Kerrera, off the piers in Oban Bay, and rock marks like Dunollie Point. Other places are at Ganavan, where both the rocks further along and the shallow sands also produce fish, the rocks at Dunstaffnage, the Windsock or Saulmore Point in the Connel Sound at the mouth of Loch Etive, and off the beach at Ledaig, near the village of Benderloch.

Loch Etive is home to some top venues but discussing them, along with how the unique hydrology and geology of the loch affects ►

Spurdogs really fire the imagination



the fishing, is something for another time.

Some marks do fish better than others, with marks facing directly out into the Firth of Lorn, like Dunollie Point or Ganavan or around the mouth of Loch Etive such as the Windsock or Saulmore Point, tending to produce the better fishing. The rocks past Ganavan Sands and the Windsock, despite both being shallow mixed ground marks, should get a special mention as they frequently produce good numbers of the species and regular catches of larger individuals. However, both require very specific conditions to fish.

Off the rocks at Ganavan, stick to fishing during the spring tide cycle (3.5m+) with the end of the flood through the full ebb with low water falling into darkness fishing best. Weather-wise, aim to fish after a period of heavy rain, particularly with a fresh south-westerly to north-westerly breeze, although calm conditions do also fish well. The reasoning behind this is that a fresh onshore breeze churns up the water, which appears to make the spurdogs more confident in moving inshore, as does fishing during the evening.

Breezy conditions can be dangerous because crashing waves and the wet steep rockface can make retrieving, unhooking and releasing fish very difficult. Fishing after periods of heavy rain is probably one of the most important factors. Fish push up nearby Loch Etive during clear and dry conditions, and the changes in salinity within the loch during and after heavy rain means that the spurdogs are more likely to be in the area rather than in deeper water or in Loch Etive.

At the Windsock, spurdogs can be caught in most weather conditions and both day and night. It requires a good knowledge of what the tide is doing, due to the strength of the tide created by the overfalls at the Falls of Lora. The water pushing over the Falls as the tide ebbs creates huge tidal currents, which push through anywhere between six to 10 knots. This will quickly dislodge and drag lead weights and baits off to the right and out of the reach of any fish.

As such, the best time to fish the Windsock is through a full flooding tide during the neap tidal cycle with high water falling into darkness. However, 60z-plus gripper weights are essential due to the strength of the tide, regardless of whether the angler is fishing the right tidal conditions.

As with Ganavan, a breezy southerly wind helps stir the water, making fish more confident and more willing to feed, particularly during the day. However, prolonged periods of unsettled weather with strong to gale force wind causes a lot of weed to be displaced, making the Windsock unfishable at times.

TACKLE, RIGS AND BAIT

Tackle does not need to be overly complicated. A general 12-14ft, 4-6oz beachcaster, with either an 8000 or 10000 fixed spool or 15 or 20 multiplier reel loaded with 15-20lb monofilament mainline and a 60-80lb shockleader, is more than capable

Fishing off the rocks at Ganavan



of subduing most spurdogs. And I would recommend good-quality rods and reels to help you cope with the fish, strong tidal conditions and the venues, many of which are rock marks over mixed ground.

My favourite set-up is 14ft Anyfish Anywhere Six&bait Mk2 coupled with a Shimano Ultegra 10000 loaded with 20lb mono and a 60lb leader. The rod's power and the smooth drag of the reel allow for plenty of control when a spurdog swims off after initially taking a bait.

This set-up also offers plenty of power to get a fish in quickly to promote more effective

catch and release, and helps bully them away from any potential snags.

I also use the a 13ft 8in Anyfish Anywhere Tournament Match Mk2 coupled with the same reel and line. The lighter match rod provides some excellent sport, but never once have I felt out-gunned. For those who use a multiplier reel, I recommend a Penn Fathom 15, which is ideally suited to this style of fishing.

Keep rigs simple with a pulley or up and over (long and low) rig with a single but strong size 4/0 to 6/0 hook, such as a Cox & Rawle Meat Hook, Sakuma 545 Manta



The larger females move inshore mostly at night

Extra or Varivas Big Mouth Xtra. Snoods should be no less than 100lb mono, although some anglers prefer a short length of supple 90-175lb 49-strand wire to combat a spurdog's sharp teeth.

My preference is a pulley rig with a roughly 4ft long, 60lb body, a snood of 15-18in of 100lb line and a size 6/0 hook. If using circle hooks, do not strike into fish, which will pull the hook out of the fish's mouth. Simply lift into the weight of the fish, which will turn the hook and pull it into the side of the mouth.

Gemini Genie link clips and 80lb mainline swivels, several 8mm luminous beads on the snood with either a pulley bead or Breakaway proper pulley are the rest of the components.

The addition of several large luminous beads provides some added attraction to the rig. Spurdogs will attack baits fished with luminous beads far more often than those without them, which is something that the charter skippers have been well aware of and have exploited in the shape of large baited luminous hokkai. The beads also act as bait stops and grant the angler added line protection from a spur's teeth, particularly if using mono hook snoods.

Mackerel, either fresh or frozen, is the most consistent bait in and around Oban, with large strips or half fillets the best for targeting specimen fish. A whole small squid is another favourite, but other fish baits like a large sandeel, launce, herring and strips of Bluey are also effective. Cocktail baits of squid and mackerel, or a large sandeel wrapped in the white belly of mackerel or a section of Bluey or squid mantle are personal favourites.

If bites are hard to come by on conventional baits, then a freshly caught poor cod or small whiting can make the difference between catching a fish and blanking when times are tough. In fact, it is not uncommon to hook juvenile cod and whiting only to reel in a savaged corpse or severed head if the spurdogs are nearby. ■

HOW TO TIE A PULLEY RIG FOR SPUDOG



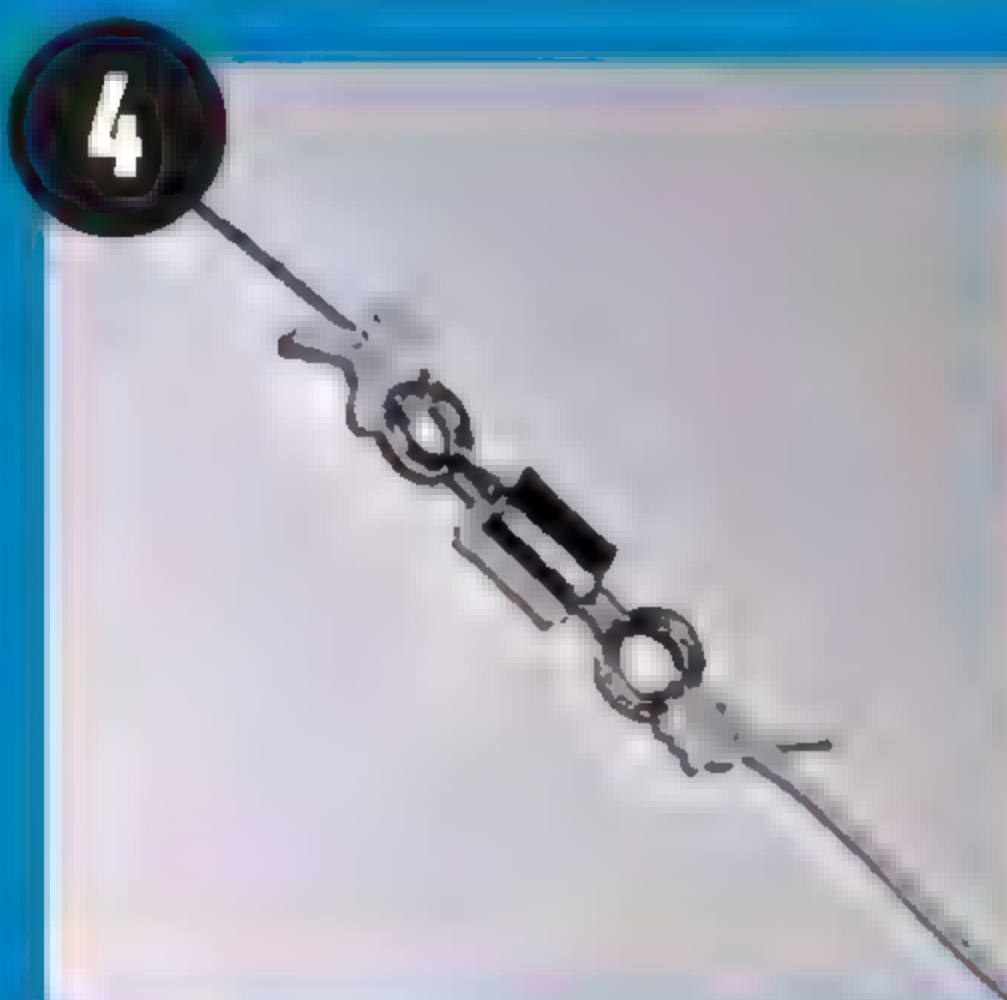
1 Take a 4ft length of 60-80lb mono to create the rig body and tie a Gemini Genie link clip or similar device to one end.



2 Thread a 5mm bead, a pulley bead or Proper Pulley and another 5mm bead to the rig body.



3 Tie a Gemini Genie 80lb mainline swivel or similar to the free end of the rig body.



4 Tie a 12-18in length of 100lb mono on one end of the rolling swivel.



5 Slide four 8mm luminous beads on the hook snood.



6 Attach a strong size 6/0 hook to the snood.



7 With a small length of 10lb Power Gum, form a sliding stop knot above the 8mm beads.



8 Finally clip on a lead weight and you are good to go.

WHY CONSERVATION IS THE KEY

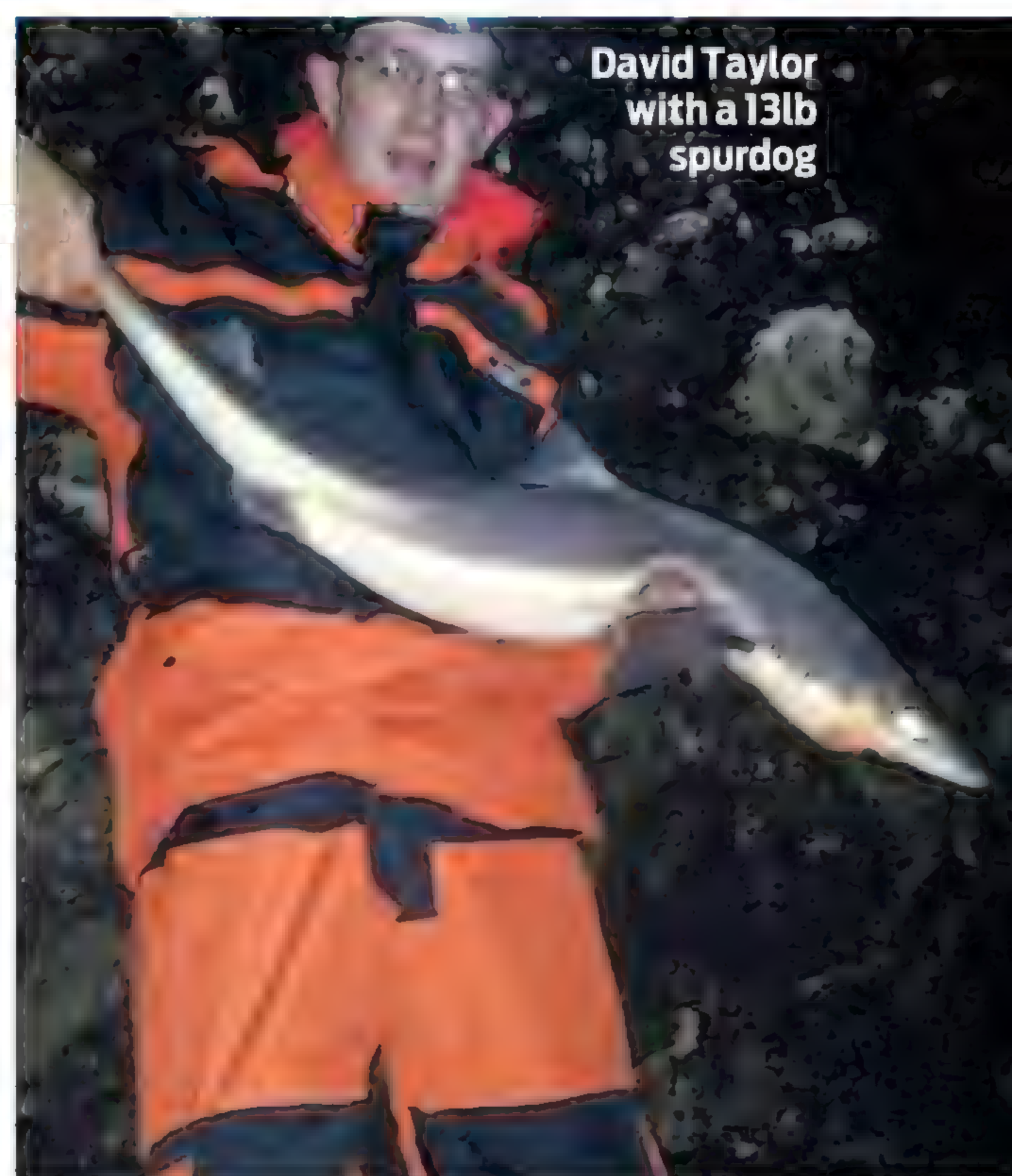
Following a strict catch-and-release angling policy is a must and very important to maintaining spurdog populations and angling opportunities.

Their characteristics of having a 24-month gestation period, giving birth to a small number (between one and 20) of well-developed young, the age of maturity of females in the north-east Atlantic being 15 years and males six years, and finally their longevity – some individuals reach over 100 years old – result in a very low rate of population increase.

Any commercial or angling pressure where fish are killed causes dramatic population declines. As such, the north-east Atlantic stock of spurs has suffered from intense fishing pressures. Declines in populations of up to 95 per cent have been recorded in some areas, including much of the UK, which has led to the spurdog being classed as an endangered species throughout north-east Atlantic waters.

The Firth of Lorn sea loch complex, which is part of the Loch Sunart to Sound of Jura Marine Protected Area (MPA) established in 2016, offers the species one of its last remaining refuges. Fish within this region appear to be part of a predominantly non-migratory sub-population that has an affinity with Loch Etive, which appears to provide its breeding and over-wintering grounds. This is unlike most spurdog populations found within the north-east Atlantic, which make large scale offshore migrations in winter and also use offshore grounds as breeding sites.

Spurdogs are now offered full protection under Scottish law, so it is an offence to intentionally injure or kill one. All spurdogs should be returned to the sea quickly and with care to ensure their survival.



David Taylor with a 13lb spurdog



It ain't over until the fat lady sings

With club competition specimen points at stake, a session on the big whiting ends in success, but would it be enough for the bragging rights?

The team in action at Mount Batten pier



A good start with the whiting



Rich Allbones with a whiting caught during darkness

WELL THIS ADVENTURE IS a little different from most of my recent trips, but having said that, it took me back to my roots and was a great session spent with some good friends.

The word around the media channels was that the big whiting had hit Plymouth Sound in great numbers, with fish weighing more than 2lb being caught regularly during the previous few nights. I decided to go and try my luck and contacted my pal Luke Johns. Soon we had organised an outing with a few other fellow members of Sea Angling Adventures SAC at Mount Batten pier to target a few specimen whiting.

They were keen to get out to help their chances in the club's Top Rods competition, in which each angler in the club fishes against one another on a specimen basis.

After work on a Wednesday evening, myself and workmate Chris Eggar, who had recently joined the club, headed down to meet Luke and the others – Nick Panther, Rob Yorke, Dan Bassett and Rich Allbones.

When we reached the car park we could see the pier was starting to get busy, so we unloaded the gear and rushed along to where Nick and Dan were positioned.

After setting up, we started to cast out and 90 minutes later we had landed 16 whiting. It had only just started to go dark, which normally switches on the whiting to feed.

Things started to go very quiet along the side of the pier facing inland across Plymouth Hoe, so Chris decided to move his gear up next to Rob. Within minutes of casting out, the whiting were biting again, but had moved out slightly further into the channel into deeper water. Chris landed the biggest fish so far, a whiting of 1lb 10oz, which gave him 100 per cent for the club contest. Rob's fish weighed 1lb 8oz.

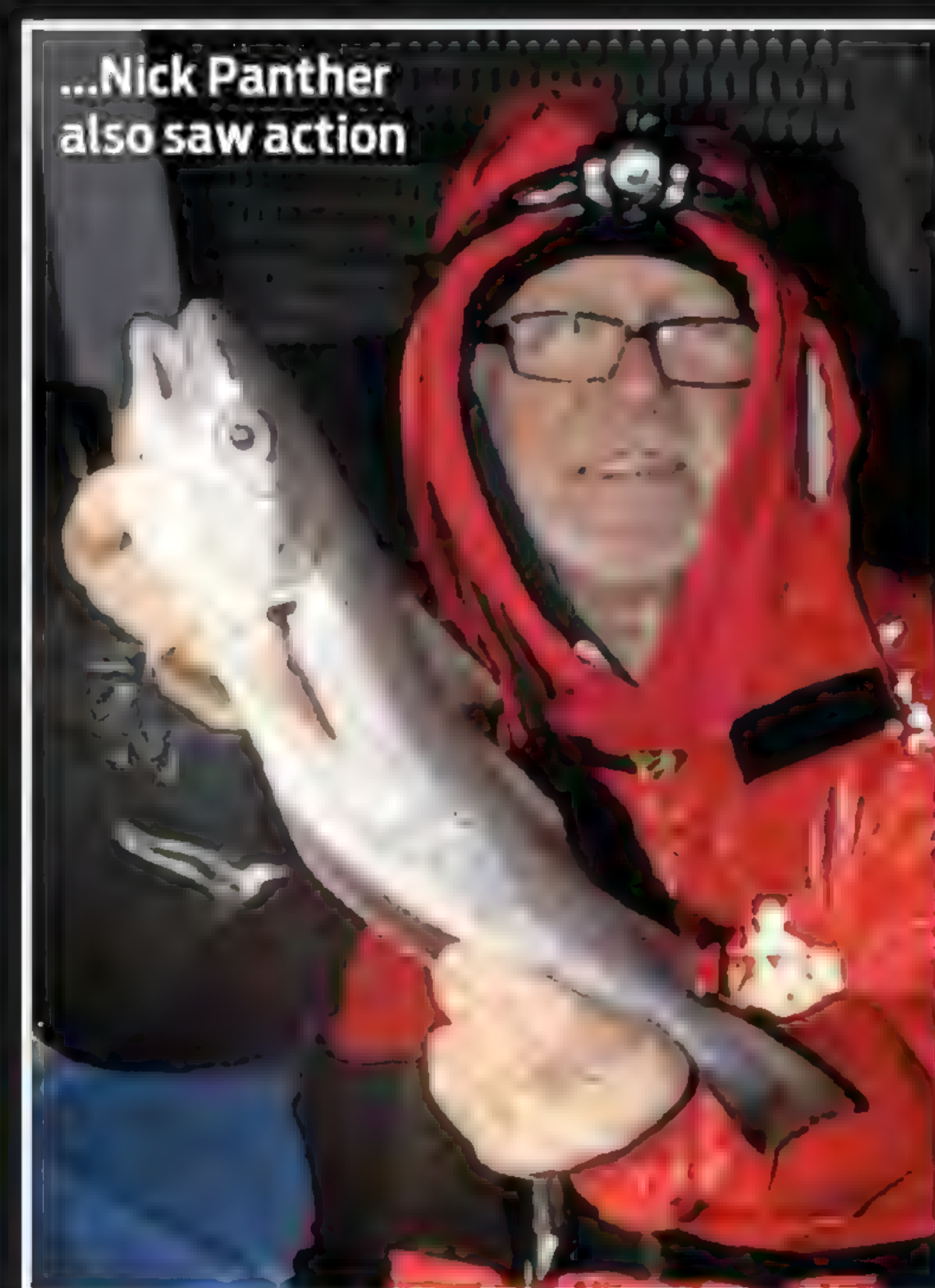
It prompted the rest of the group to move to the end point. The fish were coming in on every cast, so I decided to increase my hook size on my pulley-dropper rig. I added a pair ▶



Chris Eggar with his whiting of 1lb 10oz



A smaller whiting for Luke Johns...



...Nick Panther also saw action



of Cox & Rawle Specimen Extra size 6/0 in the hope that they would stop the smaller fish and tempt a much better specimen.

Rob, who was fishing against me, pulled out another fine fish of 11lb 9oz. I watched everyone around me landing whiting, but I sat it out in the hope that a big fish would smash my Bluey and mackerel fillet bait.

After watching Rich land another fish I noticed my line had slackened off, so I tightened the line and saw the tip of my Century T900 rod arch over. I could feel it was a much better fish, but stayed silent until I'd landed it. At 21lb 3oz, it was the fish of the night. I left the pier on a high, having collected one specimen point for the competition, putting me in the lead against Rob. However, maintaining that advantage would not be easy.

The following night, Rob and Gav Cuthbertson both ventured out to the same venue and Gav caught a 24lb conger eel. With whiting still coming in, there was a good chance he would still beat my fish, so I had to attempt to beat it myself on the Saturday morning. I'd arranged to meet club member Gethyn Durham, from South Wales, who wanted to head to Plymouth to target whiting. The midday session started slowly, but we managed a few fish. Gethyn landed a 11lb 9oz whiting and a conger eel on his last cast. Sadly, I could not get into another big whiting.

I sensed this was a bad omen. It ain't over until the fat lady sings and, sure enough, on the last night of the three-week competition, Rob smashed me with a 32lb 4oz conger eel from Chesil Beach. When you think you've got it in the bag, sometimes it's not enough. It's one of the many joys of sea angling. ■

I left the pier on a high after nabbing this 21lb 3oz whiting



A fine conger eel on his last cast for Gethyn



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WHILE MOST SEA ANGLERS have a favourite lure – usually due to how it looks, swims or how many fish it catches – sometimes you spot something that prompts reactions such as ‘I like the look of that’ or ‘That could do a specific job here’. Often it is a forgotten or out of fashion lure.

Such an event occurred over the exceptionally warm Easter weekend of 2019 when I was guiding two clients – a father and son. With the sun high in the sky and the water calm, albeit with an occasional lazy swell (the remnants of an Atlantic depression earlier in the week) and clear enough that you could see shoals of tiny sandeels being swilled around the outer edges of the rocks, the session had been rather quiet.

I had an inclusive selection of lures to cover all eventualities, but sparkling away in one of their plastic lure boxes was a long-casting, slow-sinking and fluttering 110mm, 28g casting jig called a Duo Press Bait Kamuy. To some, compared to delicately twitching a weedless soft plastic or expertly walking the dog with a surface lure, lobbing out a metal lure would appear somewhat of an antiquated approach. However, there was a method to my madness.

MATCH THE HATCH

Considering all of the possible options, in conjunction with all of the naturally occurring elements, is just one of the facets of being a professional guide. Because I don’t fish when I am guiding clients, I observe, evaluate and then ask them to apply different techniques to suit the weather, sea state, water clarity and tidal conditions (to name but a few).

It was early in the season (mid-April) and the sea temperature was only around 11°C, which meant that the metabolism of a bass is low, which in turn meant that they didn’t need to feed avidly, which ultimately translated to them being reticent to chase down their prey.

Add in the fact that there wasn’t a cloud in the sky, the sun was high and there wasn’t any wind to stir what was, primarily, a calm, clear sea. Finally, the sandeel shoals that I’d spotted were at the forefront of my mind. If there were any bass around (and I knew from fishing the same mark the day before and catching two small bass that they should be) then it made a lot of sense to attempt to replicate them. In all likelihood this was what the bass would be looking for.

Add all the ingredients together and more especially when the water is very clear (which it is here in South Devon) and bass will very



Working a lure close to the rocks often pays off

often follow a lure long distances, before turning away once they’ve realised it isn’t what they thought it might initially be.

Therefore, instead of retrieving even extremely realistic and life-like lures, such as the Savage Gear Line Thru Sandeel or the paddle-tailed Savage Gear Sandeel through the water, the route to go down is, I believe, to get an instant reaction out of a bass.

Small to medium-sized surface lures, such as the excellent and thrashing Xorus Patchino 100 or slithering IMA Salt Skimmer, can, on a calm sunny day, out-fish anything else. However, with the bass not interested in rising to the surface in the 10-15ft of water in front of us, or chasing a lure moving in a straight line, a rethink was required.

I’m sure many of you have witnessed the glistening effect of a sandeel (or indeed a small shoal) as the sunlight catches their flanks. It is comparable to the fluttering effect that a shimmering piece of metal emanates as it descends through the depths.

This is what I needed to replicate if my clients were to catch in these conditions. It was a case of getting a positive attack from a bass, that I was positive was out there over the clean sandy seabed and quickening tide.

THE METHOD

Attaching the Duo Press Bait to the father’s lure clip, I asked him cast the metal jig as far as he possibly could out into what we could clearly see was a narrow strip of faster moving water – the type of which that bass routinely

utilise to traverse the coastline.

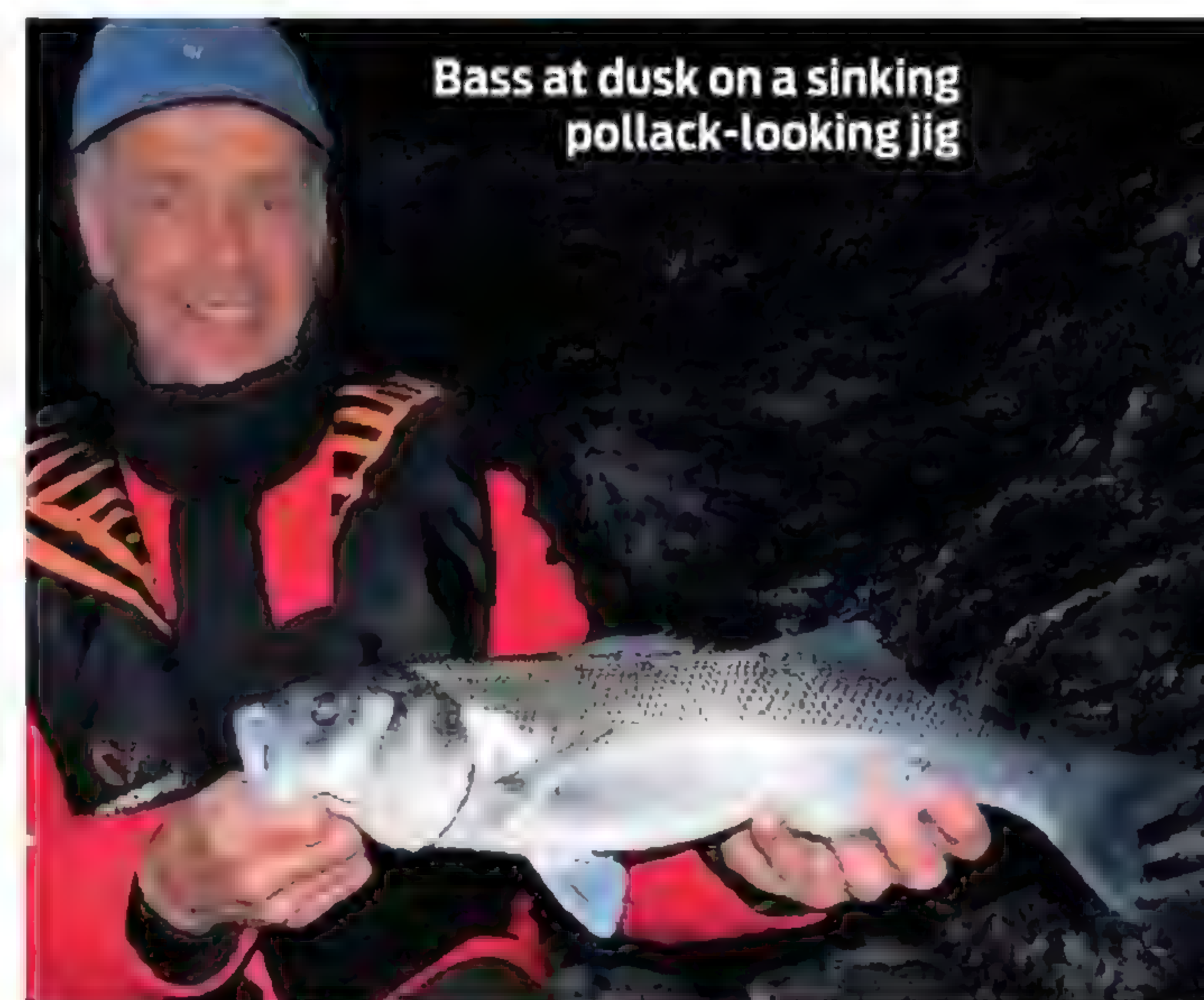
“I’d like you to allow the lure to descend to the seabed, but stay in contact with it all the way. Then, retrieve the lure in a sink-and-draw fashion, like you would if you were using a jig from a boat,” I said. “Bring the rod and lure up quickly in the water column and wind at the same time, before stopping, and then allowing the lure to fall under only slight tension (a slight bow in the line) back down a metre or so, before repeating the upward movement, and so on.”

I clambered back up to my rocky perch so I could watch both anglers. If a bass took the lure it would more than likely be on the drop, when the lure was fluttering and glimmering.

Ten minutes later I saw his rod thump over and him shout “Yep, fish!” Grabbing the net from just behind me, I stepped out on to his platform eager to see what was happening. The fish was staying deep, which was a good sign, but one that made me think it might be a pollack. But when the rod tip began to perform that nodding or jaggling effect (as a bass shakes its head and body), it came as no surprise when an angry bass appeared from the depths – and a very respectable one at that too at around 3lb 8oz. ▶



The Duo Press Bait Kamuy



Bass at dusk on a sinking pollack-looking jig

Aware my client had never caught a bass before, in addition to being exceptionally conscious of the fact that my netting skills hadn't really been called into serious action at that point in the season, I was delighted when the bass behaved and swam straight over the rim of the net. Phew!

CONSISTENCY

The bass caught and released late on during that session was the only bite and fish landed that afternoon. But in subsequent sessions with other clients, and with the overall weather and sea conditions (in addition to observing more sandeels) prevailing, I headed to similar types of marks, and they also managed to catch some very nice bass.

This technique continued to yield consistently, not just from the rocks, but also from shelving shingle beaches throughout the remainder of April and into mid-May, both during the heat of the day and into dusk.

Indeed, other jig/spinners, such as the Savage Gear 28g Seeker with a large single hook attached, accounted for a number of bass on separate sessions, in addition to the Savage Pencil Prey – another lure that my client had stashed away in his box and that I reasoned looked like a pollack.

On this occasion I'd waited until the sun had set and dusk was upon us to attach the lure, and it didn't take long for another 3lb 8oz bass to snaffle it, as my client worked it close to some rocks on that seemingly magic style of retrieve.

Don't discount the metal, or even hard plastic spinners and jigs or that incredibly basic, yet devastatingly effective sink-and-draw technique. When you suspect bass are there, you've had numerous follows and they just aren't hitting other lures, then attempting to plug into their pure predatory instinct could make the difference. ■

Hoping for another bass at dusk



Savage Gear Pencil Prey



Expect success with metals throughout April and May



The flutter effect of a Duo Press Bait tempted this Easter bass

MARC COWLING: GUIDE AND AUTHOR

Marc Cowling is a bass fishing guide who specialises in catching bass on lures from the shore in South Devon. Details on how to purchase his recently released book 'The Lure of The Bass' can be found on his website: southdevonbassguide.com.



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Small does it all

Tiny lures pay off in spring, but there is a choice of two methods – dropshot or jighead



A rockcod taken on a jighead

SPRING IS THAT TIME OF YEAR when my fishing starts to change from deep-water harbours to low-water shallow rock marks in order to find the returning fish. Of course, it can be a scratchy start with fish on the smaller side of the LRF spectrum, especially when it comes to the shallow water.

As the sea temperature starts to rise, my fishing is predominantly done using soft lures, with my two main methods being dropshotting at deeper marks and jighead rigs in shallower water.

When searching for species variety, my lure length is smaller than in summer, with lures between 2-4cm. This also goes for sections of Isome or Gulp sandworm because I am just as likely to encounter a scorpion fish as a 30cm flounder. A small-does-it-all approach fits the season.

Of course, there are pros and cons to both rigging options, so I'll try to explain why and when I use these techniques.

DROPSHOT V JIGHEAD

Some critics describe dropshotting as a boring and stationary technique. In the UK, it is seen to be an under the rod tip, work the lure in one place, style. It is very good for this approach, but there is so much more to this LRF technique.

I use it to work my lure a certain depth from the bottom. That distance is dictated by how far my hook is from the weight and remains constant throughout the retrieve. Working a lure in this manner is a searching approach, where I cast and retrieve in a 180-degree arc in order to cover as much water as possible. It is also very good for relaying what type of

ground I am fishing over, especially in deep water where I cannot see the bottom.

As far as techniques go, it can be used in multiple ways from vertical, almost stationary fishing to working a paddletail on a steady retrieve at a fixed distance from the bottom. It's very adaptable and aimed at fishing the bottom part of the water column.

Besides dead sticking a lure, dropshotting involves the slowest retrieves that I am able to employ. By using a heavier dropshot weight than a jighead, it can also cover a lot more water due to being able to cast further. It differs from the other methods due to having the ability to work a lure effectively in one place without having to draw the lure back towards me. This slow, meticulous covering of the water pays dividends, especially with those early spring flounders.

A jighead-rigged soft lure is the ultimate in trouble-free, easy-to-rig, compact, finesse fishing. It enables the user to fish effectively throughout the water column and excels at close control under the rod tip, allowing you to position a lure exactly in front of a feature or fish. However, the further you move from under the rod tip, especially with sub-2g lures, the less control you have over the lure. With dropshotting, you do not have this issue because much as the weight is generally heavier, which helps you keep a tight line and maintain sensitivity and control.

ACCURACY AND CONTROL

With the fish not as widely dispersed as in summer, accuracy and control become more important when fishing specific features where fish, particularly mini species and other rock dwellers, are collected in smaller areas.

These fish will not stray far from safety, be ►



Some jighead rigged Isome

it a crack in a harbour wall or boulder in a rock pool. Accurate positioning of a lure is the only way you can entice them out into the open to snatch your lure.

Accuracy also applies to bigger fish, such as when sight fishing for flounders in the spring. The colder water flatties are a less aggressive than in the summer, so sometimes I have to get a lure right in front of their noses before they will take it. In the summer I have seen a flounder swim 30ft to intercept my lure, but this is rarely the case in spring.

With most of my sight fishing conducted in shallow water, the jighead approach really pays off.

CONDITIONS MATTER

The technique to choose is determined by conditions. The benefits of sub-3m jigheads are ruined by wind, especially if you are positioned any distance above the water. Remember, the more you increase the weight of your jighead, the less subtle the presentation. You can use a heavier jighead, but it's hard to find a one to fit a 20mm lure.

Dropshotting offers the ability to use a heavier weight and still get a weightless lure presentation on slack line. Using a heavier weight ensures you can get your lure down to the bottom faster and with less drift than a lighter jighead. While a jighead rig will fish all the way through the water column, it is susceptible to drifting with the current due to its lesser weight.

While dropshot is effective in deeper rock pools, a jighead-rigged soft plastic gives a more accurate presentation and allows you to leave the lure hard on the bottom. The mere act of the jighead weight tapping the bottom attracts fish, especially mini species. A dropshot lead hitting the seabed has the same effect, but the lure is further away from the source of the noise, and I've seen fish attacking the weight rather than the lure.

Certainly, when the weather is very windy or rough, a dropshot approach provides more control, but you are only effectively fishing the area around the seabed.

Taking all this into consideration, my use of these two rigging options is dictated by the weather. The stronger the wind or current, the more weight I will need to maintain control, which edges the choice to dropshotting. Calmer conditions mean that I can get away with lighter weights, and that's when jigheads come into play.

The same goes for depth of water, especially when targeting bottom dwellers like flatfish. The deeper the water, the more weight I need to stay in contact with the lure, so this means dropshotting is a good bet. In shallow water the fish can be particularly timid, especially when you are fishing at close range. In order to get maximum control, a jighead rig edges it. As the depth increases, a jighead rig is best to fish through the water column, but to concentrate on the bottom area only, then a dropshot rig would suit.

Getting a good balance between these two soft lure rigging options will trigger more bites in spring. ■



The technique to choose is determined by conditions



This scorpion fish took a jighead rig fished in the margins

A dropshot-rigged
Gulp Sandworm



A small-does-it-all
approach lured this flounder

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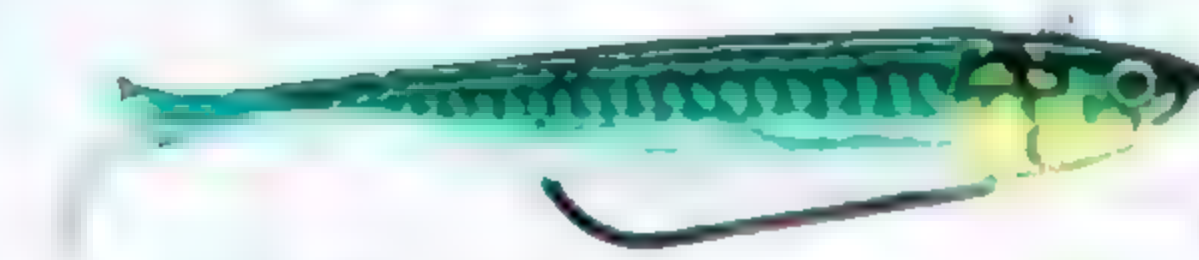
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Making history

Monster bass smashes shore best, but may not be accepted as a record

Words by James Madsen



Guntars Zukovski has plenty to smile about

SOMETIMES THESE THINGS are just meant to be. A session targeting codling gets ditched at the last minute, while fishing times and tactics are changed. Added to some horrific weather conditions, the odds of success are looking less than favourable – but then something really special happens.

Guntars Zukovski only took up sea fishing five years ago, having been a very keen freshwater angler since the age of four and now enjoys both forms of the sport. Simply put, when it comes

to fishing, he's keen as mustard and gets out whenever possible.

Living in Bridgwater, the 36-year-old, who moved to the UK from Latvia nine years ago, does most of his sea fishing in the Minehead area of the Bristol Channel. The reefs around Somerset are some of his favourite stomping grounds, where he loves the variety of different species that can be caught in this area, and the not knowing of what he is going to catch next.

So it was that on Tuesday, February 25, Guntars, who is a manager at a parcel delivery company in Bridgwater

and better known as Gruu to his friends, had planned an afternoon into an evening session. He had wanted to fish most of the flooding tide, hoping to target codling. Unfortunately, or what turned out fortunately, there were no fresh lugworms available in his local fishing tackle shop.

After almost cancelling the session because of the lack of fresh bait, he decided to go fishing anyway and just grabbed some frozen mackerel out of his freezer. By this point in time, fishing times had changed slightly, along with the target species.

TOUGH CONDITIONS

This session kicked off at 5pm, with high tide at 8pm, meaning low water would be around 2am. Still in two minds, Gruu decided on the 'chuck it and chance it' approach. He was not certain about how long he would stick it out, and a lot depended on how long he could persevere in the stormy weather.

Fishing conditions were less than pleasant, with very strong westerly winds (gusting 40mph) blowing straight into the Minehead area. The mark can be a little tackle hungry at the best of times, and these strong onshore winds would have made things more difficult.

I'm sure we've all said at some point 'big baits for big fish', but let's be honest, it's a bit of a gamble that often doesn't pay off. When I say big baits, I really mean big baits – Gruu was not messing around.

Armed with his heavier rod and reel set-up (a pair of Daiwa Sea Hunter Z beachcasters and a Penn Surfblaster 2 8000 fixed-spool reels), he was going to be chucking out whole mackerel baits on Pennell pulley rigs with size 5/0 Aberdeen hooks, fixed to a heavy 80lb snoods and a 6oz grip leads. This was definitely an all-or-nothing approach and he planned on sitting it out for a big one.

ONE MORE CAST

Because of the high winds, the big swells had kept Gruu a fair way back up on the beach, which in fishing terms was not ideal. This meant the big baits he was casting were only actually dropping around 20-30 yards out.

It was pretty grim in those conditions, but a string of bites, one resulting in a 6lb 5oz bass, kept him interested. There were some tackle losses, but when you're getting bites and catching fish, that's par for the course. At around midnight, Gruu was ready to give up after one tackle loss too many had almost tipped him over the edge.

Rather than giving in, he packed away one of his rods and decided to continue a little longer. 'Just one more cast' is a very common saying in angling, and one I'm sure has prolonged many fishing sessions over the years.

At around 2am, almost on low water, Gruu started packing away the rest of his gear. Deciding to wind in his last cast of the session, he looked up only to see his rod tip bent over, with his line moving slowly but steadily to the left-hand side of the beach. Lifting up the rod tip, he struck into what was calmly described as a "very heavy lump".

At this point in the interview I was very excited to hear about an epic battle with this massive fish. I don't want to disappoint anyone, but, unfortunately, it was a bit of an anti-climax. Bear in mind, at this point in time Gruu, who had no idea what he had hooked, described it as a fight from a "fat, lazy fish". Seems a bit harsh, but that is how it went.

There was no line screaming off the reel, just a big heavy load and a few nods on the rod tip. Gruu actually thought it might be a conger eel – until he set eyes on it. On seeing the fish, his mood quickly changed. Adrenaline was now in full flow, and no more so than when this massive bass beached itself on the shallow rock formation in front of him.

"I knew straight away this was a very special fish"





Gruu's amazing
22lb 2oz bass

Rods flying, he charged down through the water and grabbed the fish. Apparently, you could hear the screams at Butlins! Gruu said: "I knew straight away this was a very special fish."

As he stared down at the enormous bass, his head was racing and body trembling with excitement. "I couldn't quite believe what had just happened," he admitted.

CATCH AND RELEASE

Once landed, he quickly went to work on weighing and recording this massive specimen. In order to avoid damage to the fish, some quick thinking saw him model a bait towel into a makeshift weigh-sling and then the bass pulled the scales to an unbelievable 22lb 2oz.

Gruu filmed the fish being weighed and the footage is out there for us all to see on social media. He also filmed the fish going back alive. In the video you firstly see him standing in the water reviving the fish, and then watching it swimming away.

Gruu then informed me that he paced up and down the beach in a slightly crazed state for a good five minutes to make sure the fish had made a safe return. At 22lb 2oz, this bass has absolutely smashed the previous British record of 19lb 12oz, caught by John Locker at Portsmouth docks in 2012. Previous to that, the British record had stood for 24 years. This was a 19lb 11oz 12dr fish caught by Steve Cave at Sandown Pier, Isle of Wight, in 1988.

It is not uncommon for anglers to be criticised on social media for killing a fish to claim a record. Not Gruu though, because he may be unable to claim an official British record because the bass was returned and there was a lack of any independent witnesses.

Simply put, he couldn't kill the fish anyway because at the time it was caught anglers were not allowed to retain any bass. Gruu's only thoughts were for the fish's safe return. Seeing this bass swim away had made him really happy and that was more important to him.

Whatever happens now, his monster fish will not be forgotten. Make no mistake, this fish, if nothing else, will go down in the Bristol Channel's angling folklore and will definitely be talked about for years to come.

Recent statistics from the Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society included three 20lb-plus shore or boat-caught bass, the biggest a 25lb-plus giant caught in the Menai Strait by P Cowood in the 1960s. The others were a fish of 20lb by Owen Jones on November 10, 2019, at Plymouth and a 20lb-plus fish by K Price in Oct 2011 at Tenby. In our previous issue, we reported on a 20lb bass for charter skipper Lee Hall, while fishing off the Isle of Wight.

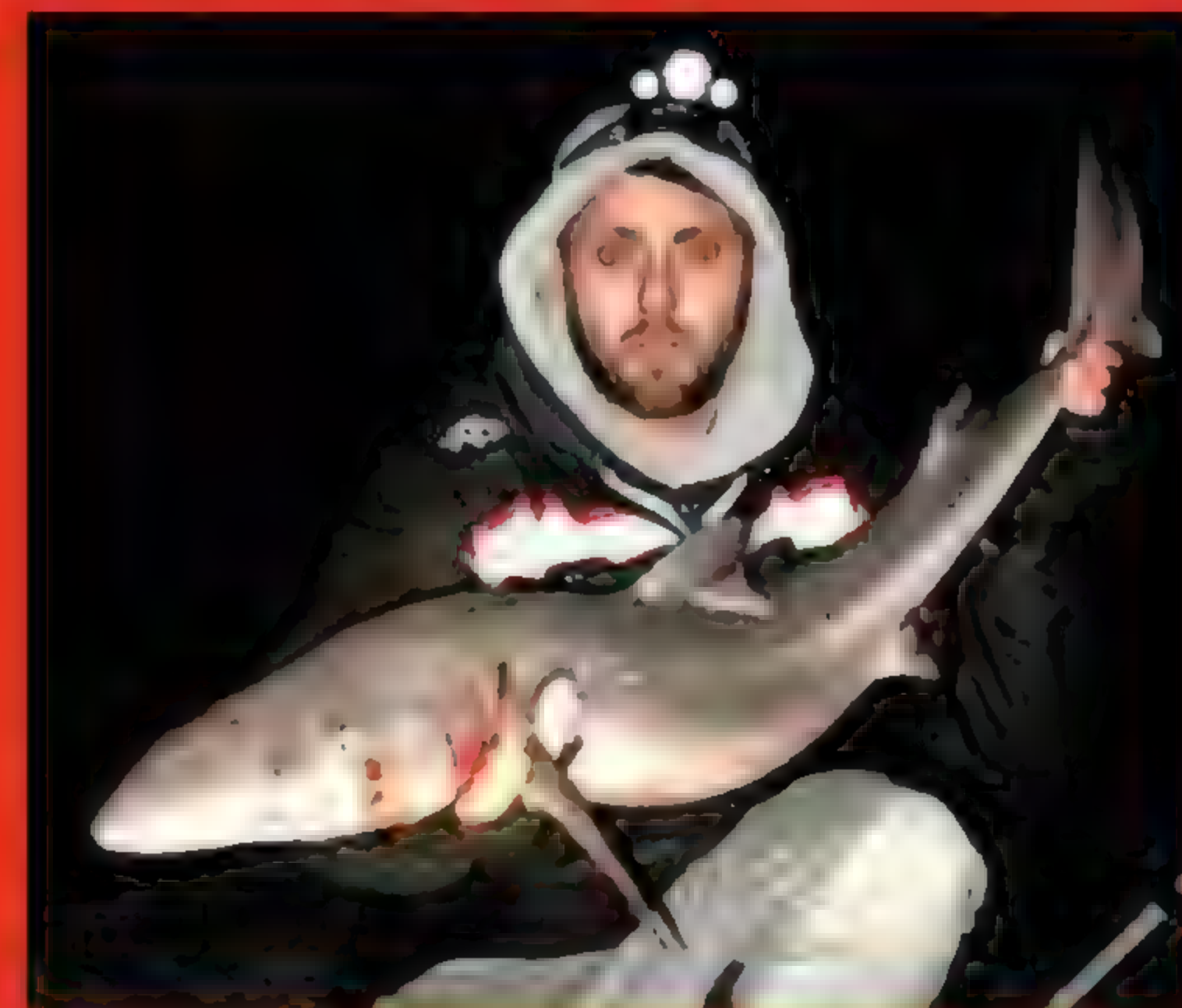
EVIDENCE NEARLY LOST

It's worth mentioning that when Gruu was returning the fish he got a right royal soaking. His waders filled with water and his phone got drenched. Bearing in mind he'd used his phone to film and photograph this amazing fish, a feeling of panic suddenly came over him. Luckily his phone was fine. Just as well because some would not have believed him. Speaking three days after the capture, Gruu said that he had hardly slept since because he was still buzzing with his amazing achievement. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPURDOG AT LAST

After years of trying to catch a spurdog from the shore, Geraint Mitchell finally achieved his goal with an 8lb 3oz fish. He fished at Porthcawl Pier, near Bridgend, with an up-and-over rig with size 6/0 Sakuma Manta hooks baited with whole squid.



HAVEN FOR BASS

Tom Rees, of Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, landed this 5lb 6oz bass on a white 20g Seaboams Midi Maggot, while fishing near his home.



8LB SILVER BEAUTY

Nick Cox, of Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan, caught this 8lb bass at a South Wales rock mark. He fished a pulley rig with size 3/0 Sakuma Manta hooks.



NEWS IN BRIEF

SPRAYING FOR COD

Darren Owen gave the inside of his mackerel bait a spray with WD40 and caught this cod while fishing at Chesil Beach, Dorset.

The angler, from Malvern, in Worcestershire, who was among a party of five, said: "It was caught on a mackerel bait on a Pennell-pulley rig with the sliding hook changed to a circle hook and wrapped tight.

"I punctured the mackerel a few times and gave it a little spray of WD40 inside the bait and managed to catch this cod."



BIG BODO BEAUTY

Highlight of Danny Logan's trip to Bodo in Norway was this 34lb 8oz cod. The angler, from Newcastle, caught plenty of cod during his stay with Guided Fishing Norway. He took this one on a Bluey and ragworm cocktail on a pulley rig with a size 10/0 hook.



COMPETITION WINNERS

Winners of our Titan smock competition (Issue 580) were: David Holmes, Hockley, Essex; Meldrum MacKenzie, Forfar, Angus; Elliot Hedgecock, Redditch, Worcs, and Keith Cheesman, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.

Big cod at the double

Shore angler lands fish of 24lb and 18lb

Having returned to sea angling only this year, Garry Pollock was promised the trip of a lifetime to the Shetland Islands by his pals... and so it proved.

Making the journey from Kinross, near Perth, Garry, who was with Andrew Boath and Nick Muir, arrived in Lerwick early on February 20 before heading to their accommodation in Tresta. Soon they were heading north to a Mainland mark, which they fished on the Thursday and Friday.

"Both my friends landed cod ranging from 12lb to 17lb," said Garry, 36, who started to get bites in darkness, but missed several fish. Eventually he hooked one, but as he applied too much pressure his line broke after about two minutes of the fight.

"It was about 11.30pm, when we were about to call it a day, that I hooked into a dead weight. This time I took my time to land it, and after about seven minutes of it nodding its head like something I never felt before and stripping about 100 metres of braid in the process, I finally landed it. It was like pulling in a car," he said.

Weighing in at a whopping 24lb 8oz, he was "jumping for joy" and amazed that he'd

managed to land such a specimen. After a couple of photographs, the cod was returned and swam off.

"We fished again on the Saturday during daylight with no takes, so after a bite to eat we headed back for a night session and it was quiet, to say the least. Then at around 9pm the braid was doing a runner again," said Garry.

"Carefully lifting into it, I was into my next cod. After about four minutes and with it dragging a dead weight for 100 metres, it started to shake its head during the last 10 metres, when I thought my line would snap."

Eventually, he landed the superbly marked cod of 18lb 7oz. It, too, was returned.

Both his big cod fell to cocktails consisting of Bluey, squid and cart.

The following two days failed to produce cod, but there were flatfish and lots of coalfish caught.

"All in all, a trip of a lifetime including beating my personal best of just over 10lb, caught in the Anstruther area this year. It is definitely a year to remember," said Garry. "It was a superb trip, I met some great people and caught fish beyond my wildest dreams."

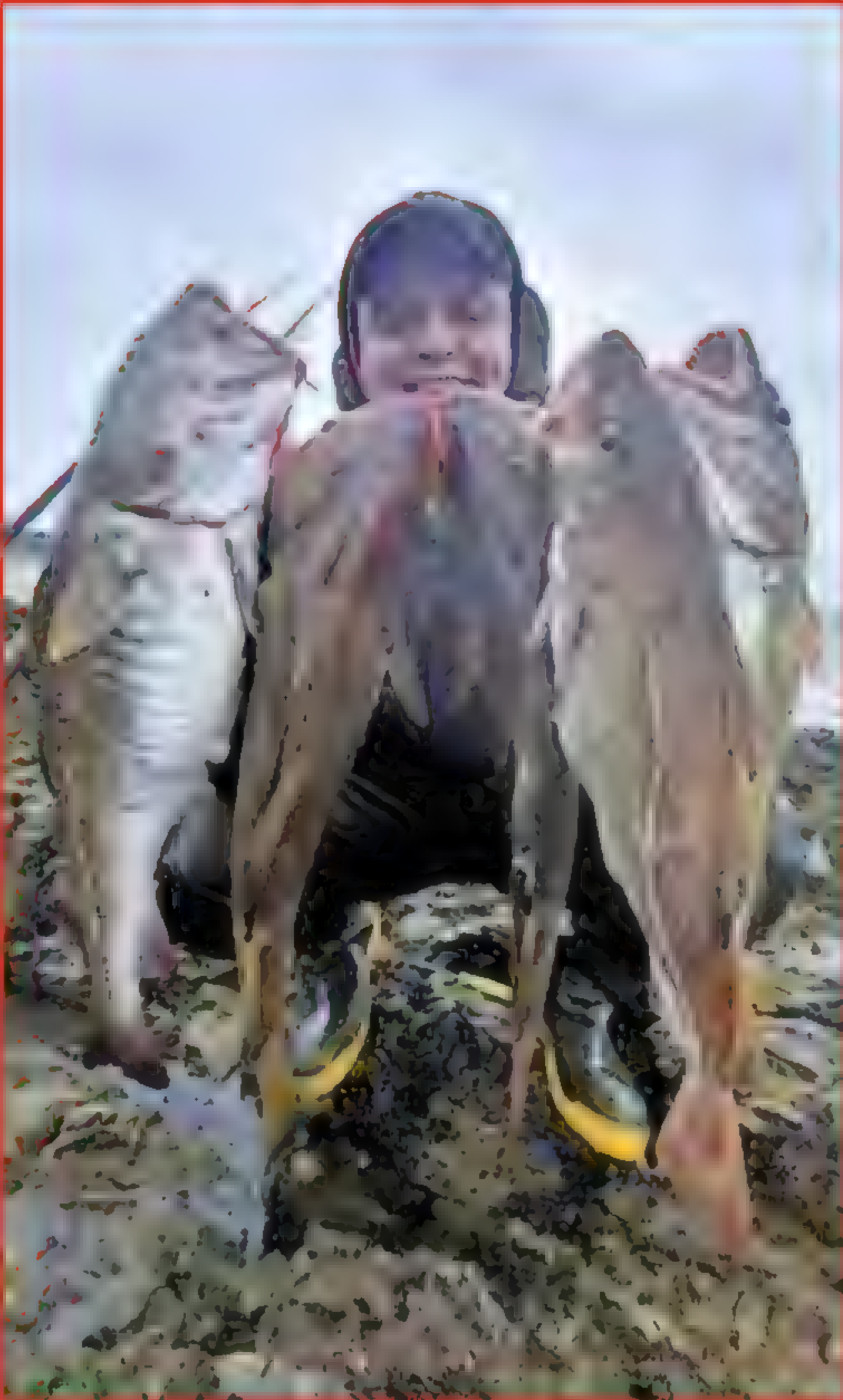
Garry Pollock with cod of 24lb 8oz and 18lb 7oz



NEWS IN BRIEF

IN SEVENTH HEAVEN

Danny Crump, who works at Holton Road Angling, in Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, fished over low water at Barry and caught seven codling, the best weighing 4lb 12oz.



HOT SPORT FOR CONGERS IN SUSSEX

A big bait of four squid produced this 30lb 6oz conger eel for Michael Funnell at Worthing pier, West Sussex. The angler, from Lancing, used a Tronixpro Cobra GT2 rod, Penn Spinfisher reel, 60lb Asso mainline, and a 200lb conger trace with a size 8/0 Cox & Rawle hook.

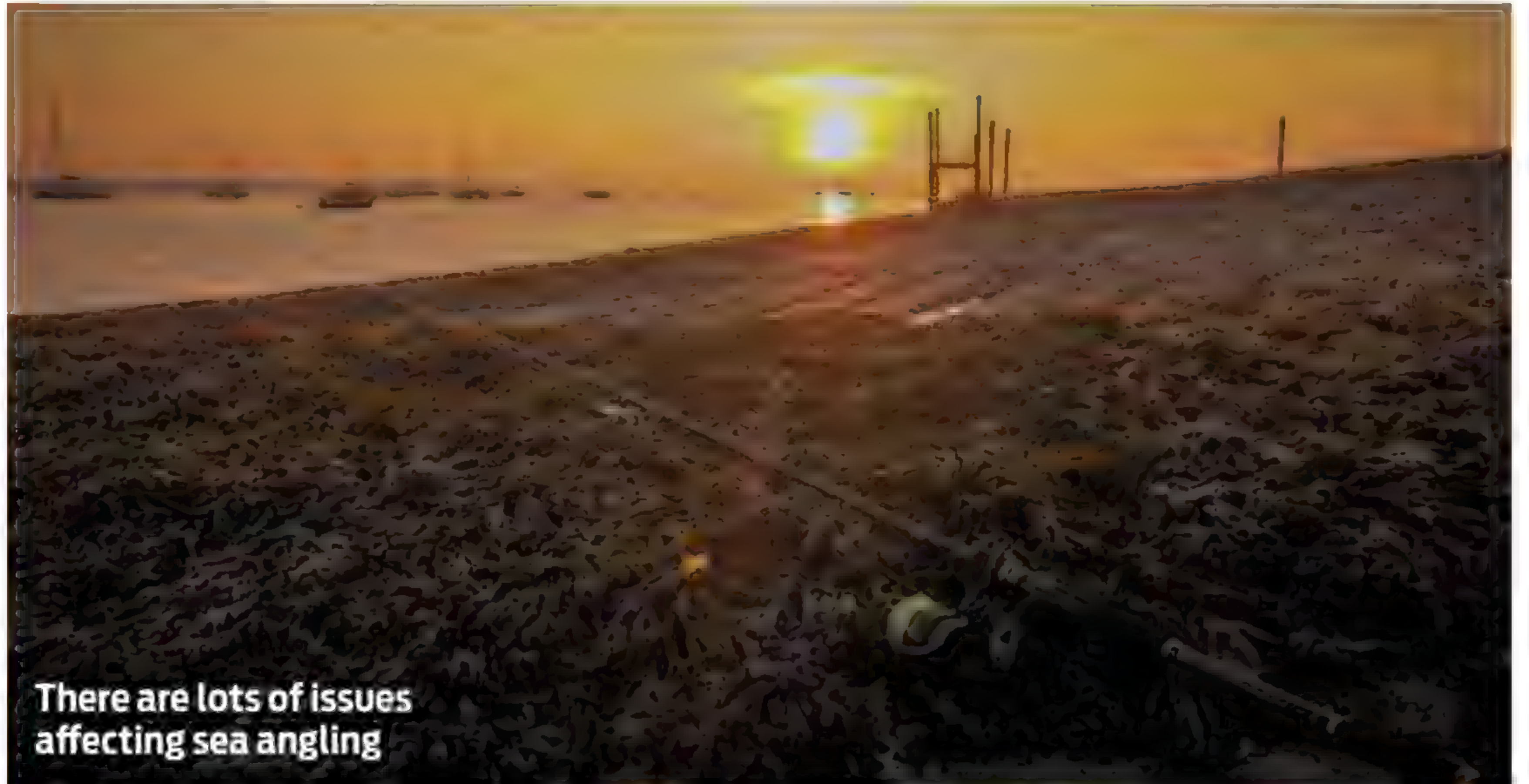
At nearby Eastbourne, there have been plenty of conger eels, with reports of anglers losing big fish. Local rod Julian French caught one estimated at 23lb at Langney Point in a match, only to see it bite through the trace and slide back into the sea, but two weeks later he fished a match at White Horses and won with a conger of 19lb.

Ricky Diamond also caught a 17lb-plus conger from a local rock mark.



Making waves

Independent group to fight for sea anglers



There are lots of issues affecting sea angling

AN INDEPENDENT ANGLING protection and promotion organisation is seeking to expand its operations from coarse fishing into sea angling, while claiming it is not seeking to be a rival to the Angling Trust.

Fishery Watch has, according to its sea fishing consultant Peter Baker, been "making waves" in the coarse fishing community and is also dedicated to supporting sea anglers.

"There are lots of issues that affect sea fishing in and around our shores that need addressing, and we are here to help in any way we can," he said.

An independent body run by an expanding group of dedicated volunteers committed to protect the future of angling, Fishery Watch prides itself on a positive approach and being 100 per cent transparent.

Fishery Watch, Peter said, "has recognised that the sea angling community does not receive half the support that coarse fishing does, but with more rules and regulations associated with sea angling, more support is needed. It is here to help in many areas, from getting our voice heard more, to actively campaigning for coastal safety."

When asked if Fishery Watch was seeking to compete with the Angling Trust, Peter said: "We don't want to use the word rival."

Peter, who is also Fishery Watch's social media manager and Essex area co-ordinator, added: "We are trying to take a different approach and create a positive presence in the angling community so we can, as volunteers, protect what we love."

Founder of Fishery Watch is Adrian Lane, a former employee of the Angling Trust, where he was area co-ordinator for Gloucestershire for the Voluntary Bailiff Scheme.

He added: "We intend to do for sea anglers everything the Angling Trust has failed to and more. Fishery Watch will step up to the

mark in time, we'll stand by the guy who needs it."

With its team of more than 400 water keepers, who include police officers, Fishery Watch's support, for instance for coarse fishing, can include day and night monitoring of concerns or reported illegal fishing. Like the Angling Trust, it can also provide help with legal matters and pollution. Currently being developed is an online training facility for numerous areas relating to fishing.

"A coastal clean-up scheme is also being developed to organise large groups of volunteers to keep our coast tidy," added Peter. "Fishery Watch will take on any task it feels that it can handle, and its services are free of charge. It will always listen to ideas and suggestions to improve this great sport."

"Could this be the change we have been waiting for? Has it arrived when we need a voice the most?" he asked.

Fishery Watch, which is in the process of gaining charitable status, is looking to expand what it does further into sea fishing, and Peter is hoping to get sea fishing clubs on board.

Describing himself as an experienced sea angler, who brings a lot of knowledge to Fishery Watch and is not afraid to use it, Peter said: "If you are a sea angler and need assistance in any way, simply get in touch."

■ For more information regarding Fishery Watch, visit www.fisherywatch.co.uk
Need to report something? 01594 888134 (9am-11pm) or 07543 092373 (24/7).



Peter Baker is Fishery Watch sea fishing consultant

Big skate adventures

Newcastle angler David Williams (below) had a great result when he landed his first shore-caught common skate, describing the 190lb fish as "very powerful". He was fishing the shoreline of the Sound of Mull with a Pennell-pulley rig made with 200lb

mono and size 10/0 Mustad Viking hooks baited with half a Bluey and two baby squid.

There was also a first common skate, weighing 171lb, for Jay Hemming, from Dorset (below right). It was the highlight of a four-day shore fishing trip to Scotland

for the Bournemouth angler. Fishing in the Oban area, after catching plenty of dabs, small codling and 15-spined sticklebacks, Jay hooked his big fish on the last day. He was using a Century Kompressor rod, 70lb braid mainline and a 250lb hooklength.



PATIENCE PAYS

Being patient paid off for Laurence Hanger when he landed this 4lb 15oz thick-lipped mullet while float-fishing from the Cornish coast.

"It is one of the most beautiful, fin-perfect thick-lipped I've ever seen," he said.

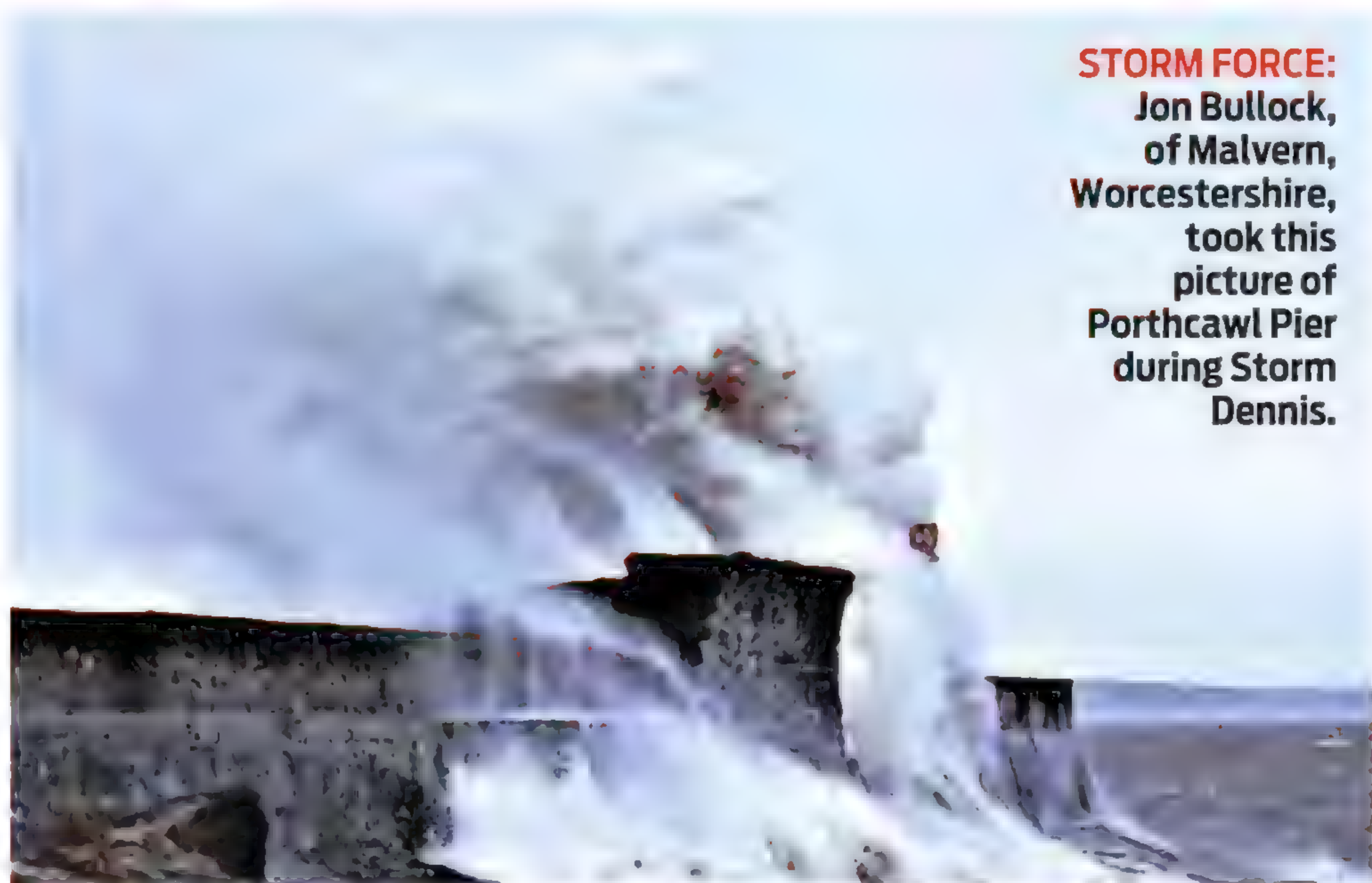
The angler, from Cornwall, added: "I was constantly feeding groundbait, which consisted of three loaves of mashed bread with a bit of krill oil to give it added attraction, while trotting a piece of bread flake through the swim for four hours, waiting for that very short window of opportunity.

"Trying to steer these powerful creatures through snag-infested water on an 11ft float rod and 6lb line in extreme tidal currents always makes for a nervous battle."

OUT THERE

Dragon Baits.

Memorable moments from your latest sessions



STORM FORCE: Jon Bullock, of Malvern, Worcestershire, took this picture of Porthcawl Pier during Storm Dennis.

BAIT WINNER

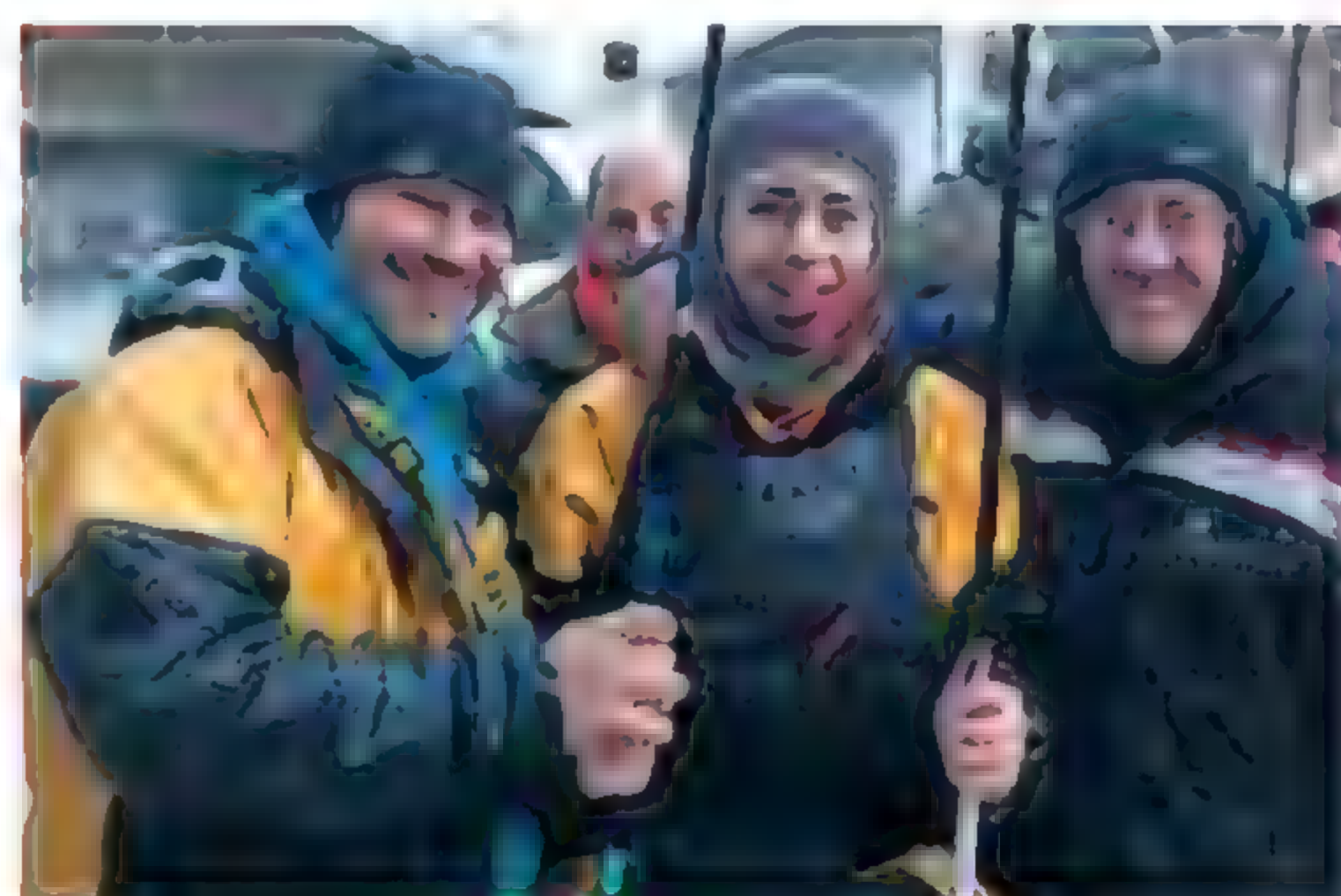
DADS & LADS: Sam Smith and his youngest son Liam, fishing Wigton Bay in Dumfries & Galloway at sunset. "It was just before the dogfish came on the feed with a vengeance," said Sam, of Newbiggin, Northumberland.

WIN A PACK OF DRAGON BAITS RAGWORMS

The best two pictures, selected by the Sea Angler team, will earn the sender 1lb of rag, worth £15 plus p&p, from farmed bait specialist, Dragon Baits.

Please include your name and address when submitting your photograph to cliff.brown@bauermedia.co.uk.

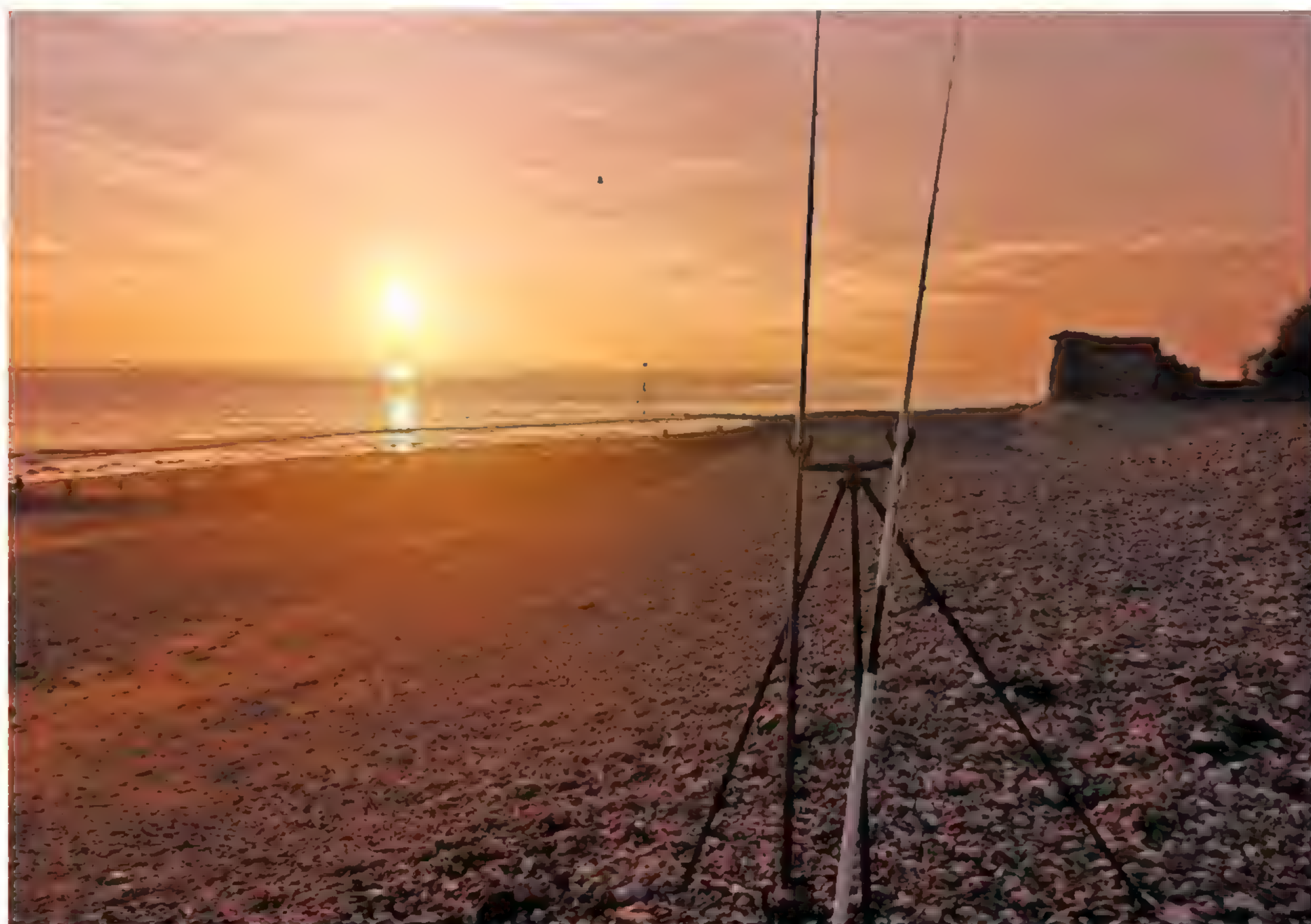
The company supplies the trade, organisations, fishing clubs and individual anglers direct from its farm in South Wales. Contact Dragon Baits, tel: 01639 894111. Email: info@dragonbaits.co.uk Web: dragonbaits.co.uk



GENERATION GAME: Three generations of the Preston family enjoying a day's fishing aboard Tony Parry's boat Jensen 2 on the Mersey. "We had a great day, with lots of fish to keep us busy," said Matty Preston, of Carnforth, Lancs. The picture shows (left to right) Matty, Luke Preston and Robin Preston. They caught rays, cod and whiting.



RAINBOW WARRIOR: Danny Beresford, from Jacksdale, Notts: "I had a last-minute fishing trip after a day off work. I made the 100-mile trip to North Withernsea. Conditions were far from perfect, fishing right in the middle of Storm Ciara. No fish caught, but managed to grab this picture during a break in the weather."



BAIT WINNER

THE WAIT: Ready for the action to begin at sunset at Abbotsbury, Chesil Beach, is Carl Dodds, of Exmouth, Devon. He caught and released a strap conger, undulate rays and several school bass.

GLOWING TRIBUTE: John Burton, who lives in Chichester, West Sussex, captured this stunning image of Selsey Bill at sunset.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Catch a specimen fish to earn a badge and a chance of winning quality **Shimano** tackle

FANCY WINNING TACKLE FROM SHIMANO by catching a fish? Your target is to catch one over the weight given on our nominated species list.

If you do, you automatically win a Mission Accomplished badge, as well as being in with the chance of winning a great monthly tackle prize.

Each issue we award a superb Shimano reel to the captor of the best shore fish and best boat-caught fish, both chosen on merit. There is no choice of prize, which is awarded at our discretion.



Michael Page, Plymouth, Devon.
Fish: 19lb 8oz blonde ray. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Sea Angler II (Malcolm Jones), Plymouth, Devon. **Date:** February 4.



Colin Paterson, Dunrossness, Shetland Islands. **Fish:** 23lb 9oz. **Bait:** Whole squid on a Pennell pulley rig. **Venue:** Shetland Islands. **Date:** February 19.



Philip Watson, Liskeard, Cornwall.
Fish: 4lb 4oz mullet.
Bait: Bread under a bubble float. **Venue:** River Tamar, Cornwall.
Date: February 27.

MONTHLY WINNERS
■ **SHORE:** Michael Funnell, 30lb 6oz conger eel.
■ **BOAT:** Michael Page, 19lb 8oz blonde ray.



Peri Chapman, Mold, Flintshire. Fish: 5lb ling. **Bait:** Mackerel on a pulley rig.
Venue: White Beach, Anglesey. **Date:** February 22.



Michael Funnell, Lancing, West Sussex. Fish: 30lb 6oz conger eel. **Bait:** Four whole squid on a running leger rig. **Venue:** Worthing Pier, West Sussex. **Date:** March 2.



Jason Bradley, Cowes, Isle of Wight. Fish: 9lb 4oz bass. **Bait:** Squid, mackerel and herring. **Venue:** Cowes, Isle of Wight. **Date:** March 6.



MISSION BADGE WINNERS

BASS SHORE

Jason Bradley, Cowes, 9-4*, Cowes
Jeff Harp, Mountain Ash, 10-3*, Cardiff

COD SHORE

Andrew Boath, Edinburgh, 19-0*, Shetland
Colin Paterson, Dunrossness, 23-9*, Shetland
Jim Polson, Burray, 25-5*, Shetland
Struan Turnbull, Tranent, 7-3, Aberdeen

CONGER SHORE

Michael Funnell, Lancing, 30-6*,
Worthing pier

FLATFISH SHORE

Jim Polson, Burray, 2-1 plaice*, Shetland

LING SHORE

Peri Chapman, Mold, 5-0*, Anglesey

MULLET SHORE

Philip Watson, Liskeard, 4-4, River Tamar

POLLACK SHORE

Adam Hutchinson, Filey, 6-4-8, Filey Brigg

RAY SHORE

Ryan Bowen, Caerau, 10-0 small-eyed,
Witches Point
Anthony Egerton, Newport, 4-7 spotted*,
Ryde pier
Mathew Phillips, Goodwick, 9-4
thornback*, Brean
Terry Selby, Lytchett Matravers, 13-5
undulate*, Sandbanks

RAY BOAT

Michael Page, Plymouth, 19-8 blonde*,
Plymouth

SHARK SHORE

Gary Chapman, Padstow, 12-6 spurdog,
Bristol Channel
Peri Chapman, Mold, 10-0 bull huss*,
Anglesey

* denotes catch and release



Mathew Phillips, Goodwick, Pems.
Fish: 9lb 4oz thornback ray. **Bait:** Herring on an up-and-over rig. **Venue:** Brean, Somerset.
Date: March 5.

BADGES

Shimano Mission badges are sent out after the catches have appeared in Sea Angler magazine

Jim Polson,
Burray, Orkney.

Fish: 25lb 5oz
cod. **Bait:** Bluey,
squid and black
lug on a
pulley rig.

Venue:
Shetland
Islands.

Date: Feb 16.



ENTRY FORM

Badges are sent out after your name appears in the magazine.

Name

Age

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email

Type of fish

Caught at

Weight

Date caught

Bait/Rig

Caught from: shore ☐ boat ☐

Boat name

Skipper

Port

Witness & tel

My fish was returned ☐
was not returned ☐

Post to: Shimano Mission,
Sea Angler magazine, Media House,
Lynchwood, Peterborough PE2 6EA.
Alternatively, email picture & details
to: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

Yes please, keep me up to date via email with the
latest news and special offers from Sea Angler ☐
Please do let us keep in contact so we make sure
you don't miss out.

You can unsubscribe at any time from any email
we send you via the unsubscribe link or emailing
dataprotectionofficer@bauermedia.co.uk
For our privacy policy go to <http://www.bauerdatapromise.co.uk>
Bauer Media Group consists of Bauer Consumer
Media Ltd, Bauer Radio Ltd and H Bauer Publishing

YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish of this weight or above in your region to qualify for a badge. Use the entry form (left) and send to the address shown. Alternatively, you can email the required details required and your picture to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	8lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's &		
Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	15lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

SEND US YOUR ENTRIES AND WIN SOME GREAT PRIZES



The winners of the best shore-caught and boat-caught fish win a Shimano reel. The sponsor reserves the right to send an alternative prize of equal value.



THE RULES...

■ Only fish caught since March 2020 are eligible. ■ We must see a picture of the fish. ■ We may refuse an entry. ■ You can claim one badge per species in an issue. ■ A further badge can be awarded in future only if you set a new personal best. ■ Enter by post using the coupon; by email (please include information requested on the postal form) to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk ■ Prizes are as stated (Shimano reserves the right to send alternatives). ■ No correspondence will be entered into.

BADGES

Shimano Mission badges are sent out after the catches have appeared in Sea Angler magazine

In association with

SHIMANO



Ryan Bowen, Caerau, Maesteg.
Fish: 10lb small-eyed ray. **Bait:** Bluey and squid on a pulley-dropper rig.
Venue: Witches Point. **Date:** January 22.



Terry Selby, Poole, Dorset.
Fish: 13lb 5oz undulate ray.
Bait: Squid and mackerel on a pulley rig.
Venue: Sandbanks, Dorset. **Date:** Feb 25.



Peri Chapman, Mold, Flintshire.
Fish: 10lb bull huss. **Bait:** Cuttlefish on a pulley rig. **Venue:** Anglesey, North Wales.
Date: March 7.



Andrew Boath, Edinburgh.
Fish: 19lb cod. **Bait:** Mussel, squid and Bluey on a pulley rig. **Venue:** Shetland.
Date: February 21.



Anthony Egerton, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Fish: 4lb 7oz spotted ray. **Bait:** Bluey on a pulley rig. **Venue:** Ryde Pier, Isle of Wight.
Date: March 1.

MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS

■ **Shore:** 19lb 13oz 8dr
John S Locker
■ **Boat:** 19lb 4oz
Wayne Milton

BLACK BREAM

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz 1dr
C Le Monnier
■ **Boat:** 6lb 6oz
Tony Heart

COUCH'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 2lb 15oz 1dr
Lynton Carre
■ **Boat:** 7lb Becky
Lee Hodges

GILTHEAD BREAM

■ **Shore:** 9lb 8oz
Scott Smy
■ **Boat:** 10lb 2oz
Roger Simcox

PANDORA'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 1lb 2oz
Baz Wheeler

RAY'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 6lb 1oz
Jordan Colwell

RED BREAM

■ **Boat:** 6lb 4oz
Patrick Meegan

BRILL

■ **Shore:** 6lb 12oz
Mark Griggs
■ **Boat:** 13lb 10oz
Tony Hayward

TURBOT

■ **Shore:** 20lb 2oz
Eddy Barham
■ **Boat:** 32lb 1oz
Steve Scally

BULL HUSS

■ **Shore:** 21lb 9oz
M Urquhart
■ **Boat:** 23lb
D Nicholson

COD

■ **Shore:** 32lb
Adrian Lloyd
■ **Boat:** 43lb 9oz
Chris Proctor

CONGER EEL

■ **Shore:** 66lb 8oz
Andy Eke
■ **Boat:** 109lb 8oz
Roger Beer

DAB

■ **Shore:** 2lb 4oz 12dr
Jason Tucker
■ **Boat:** 1lb 15oz
Sean McCaffrey

FLOUNDER

■ **Shore:** 4lb 14oz 8dr
Paul Blehs
■ **Boat:** 5lb 3oz 14dr
Philip Dawson

DOVER SOLE

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz
Phil Troke
■ **Boat:** 4lb 6oz
M Le-Moignan

HALIBUT

■ **Boat:** 56lb 12oz
Peter Strickson

LEMON SOLE

■ **Boat:** 3lb 3oz
G Newcombe

MEGRIM

■ **Boat:** 2lb 14oz
Philip Lewis

PLAICE

■ **Shore:** 6lb 11oz
Martin Coates
■ **Boat:** 8lb 0oz 8dr
M Mowbray

LING

■ **Shore:** 18lb 11oz
Ross McKay
■ **Boat:** 88lb 6oz 8dr
G Laurenson

GOLDEN GREY MULLET

■ **Shore:** 3lb 8oz 8dr
D Woolcombe
■ **Boat:** 4lb 11oz
Stephan Martini

MULLET

■ **Shore:** 11lb 8oz
Glenn Lane
■ **Boat:** 11lb
Chris Harris

POLLACK

■ **Shore:** 18lb 4oz
Chris Griffin
■ **Boat:** 27lb 1oz
Barry James

BLONDE RAY

■ **Shore:** 31lb
Gary Tucker
■ **Boat:** 39lb 10oz
S Underwood

COMMON SKATE

■ **Shore:** 232lb
Lew Marsden
■ **Boat:** 249lb
Hans Dykman

CUCKOO RAY

■ **Shore:** 4lb 11oz
Kevin Hughes
■ **Boat:** 5lb 8oz
L Longmore

EAGLE RAY

■ **Shore:** 102lb
Ray Lewis

ELECTRIC RAY

■ **Boat:** 52lb
Chris Wood

MARBLED ELECTRIC

■ **Shore:** 11lb 1oz 5dr
Pierre Garrick
■ **Boat:** 21lb 7oz 12dr
David Bree

SMALL-EYED RAY

■ **Shore:** 17lb 8oz
M Robertson
■ **Boat:** 21lb
Dave Lynes

SPOTTED RAY

■ **Shore:** 7lb 14oz
Liam Warder
■ **Boat:** 8lb 4oz
Neil Buckett

STINGRAY

■ **Shore:** 75lb 4oz
Ed Spring
■ **Boat:** 69lb 8oz
John Styles

THORNBACK RAY

■ **Shore:** 22lb 11oz 10dr
Mike Johnson
■ **Boat:** 24lb 11oz
Gary Mewdell

UNDULATE RAY

■ **Shore:** 20lb 1oz
Steve Harder
■ **Boat:** 25lb 2oz
Scott Russell

ANGEL SHARK

■ **Boat:** 54lb
John Johnson

BLUE SHARK

■ **Boat:** 253lb
James Fellows

MAKO SHARK

■ **Shore:** 194lb 4oz
Andrew Griffith

PORBEAGLE SHARK

■ **Boat:** 484lb 8oz
Chris Bett

THRESHER SHARK

■ **Boat:** 350lb
Bob Smith

SMOOTHOUND

■ **Shore:** 28lb 10oz
Steve Cullen

PORBEAGLE SHARK

■ **Boat:** 30lb
Trevor Knight

SPURDOG

■ **Shore:** 18lb 14oz
William Roche

■ **Boat:** 25lb 4oz
Shane Salmon

TOPE

■ **Shore:** 66lb 10oz
Michael Bell

SMOOTHOUND

■ **Boat:** 86lb
David Cook

BALLAN WRASSE

■ **Shore:** 9lb 4oz
Darren Swift

CUCKOO WRASSE

■ **Boat:** 9lb
Glen Carter

WHITE SKATE

■ **Shore:** 11lb 13oz
Joe Edward

■ **Boat:** 21lb 4oz
D Glendenning

WHITE SKATE

■ **Boat:** 160lb
Pete Hammersley

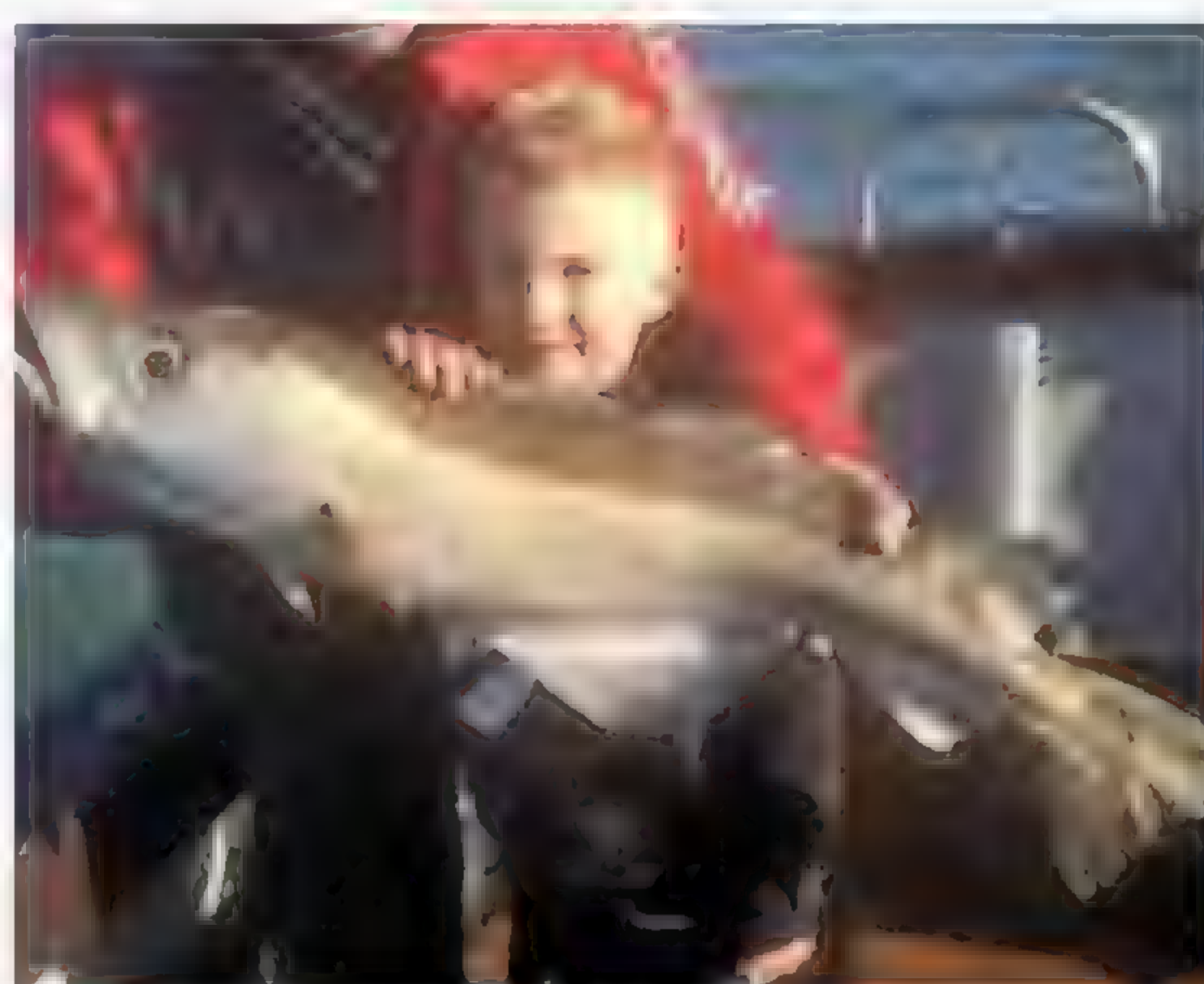
* denotes catch and release

YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its younger readers



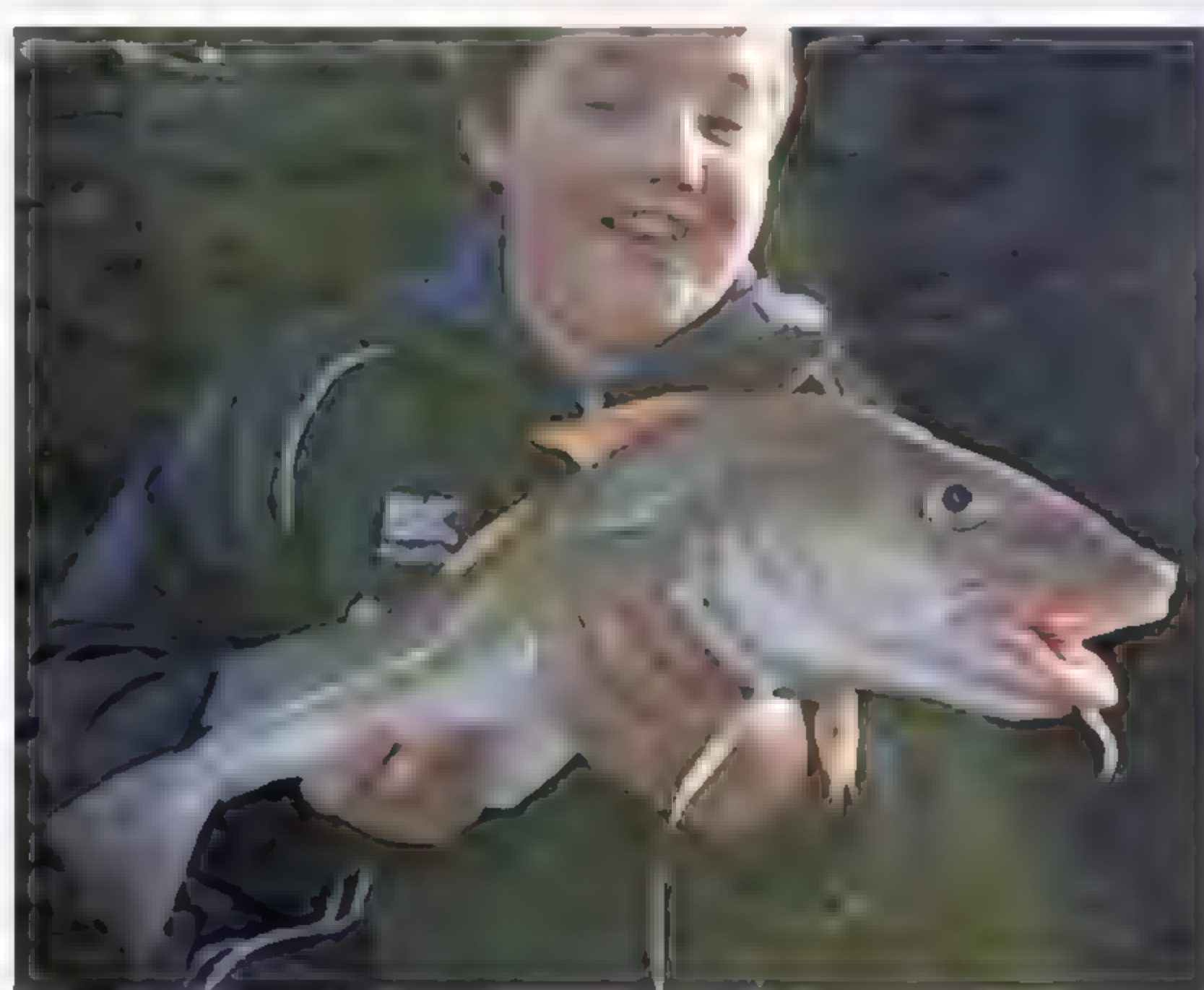
At the end of last summer, **Billy Taylor**, from Morecambe, Lancs, joined skipper Rob Rennie on his charter boat Lady Jen out of Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, to go in search of a blue shark. It didn't take too long before this 70lb specimen grabbed his mackerel bait.



Benjamin Brewster, from Farncombe, Surrey, joined the Trio Fishing Club aboard Final Answer skippered by Dan Parker out of Littlehampton, West Sussex. Using mackerel baits, he successfully reeled up this cracking 13lb pollack.



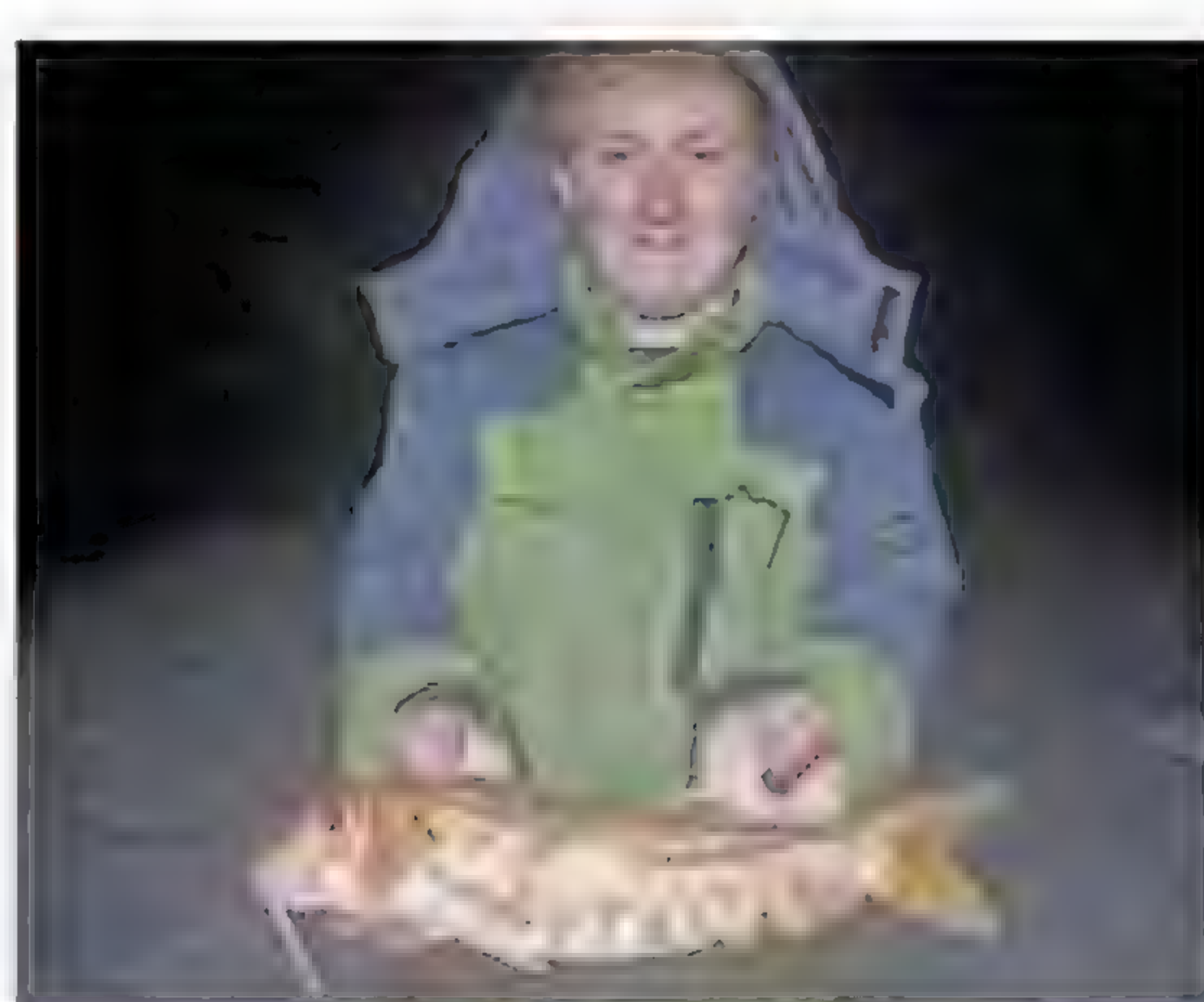
Dylan James caught this conger eel that slammed the scales to 24lb, when he fished from the shore near his home in Holyhead, Anglesey. The 15-year-old presented a mackerel and squid combo on a Pennell pulley rig and promptly returned it after a brief photo.



Dillon Quick enjoyed a productive shore session targeting codling at Ladye Bay, in Somerset. The eight-year-old, from nearby Clevedon, used lug tipped with squid baits on a Pennell pulley rig, and his biggest fish of the trip was 3lb 8oz.



Courtney Jones, 11, from Llanberis, North Wales, caught her first fish when she was taken fishing by her grandad at Morecambe, Lancs. The bass weighed 2lb 2oz.



Harry Gamble, aged 12, of Stockport, fished Aberdaron beach in Gwynedd. Using a two-hook flapper rig baited with ragworms, he caught this red mullet estimated to weigh around 2lb.



Seven-year-old **Lewis Shanks**, from Morvern, in the Highlands, bagged this 6lb pollack when he worked a 4in Savage Gear Sandeel from his dad's boat in Loch Aline.



Bailey Williams, from Bridgwater, in Somerset, shows off a cracking double shot of Dover soles weighing 2lb 10oz and 2lb 3oz. The 10-year-old used a three-hook rig armed with ragworms during a session at Brean Sands beach.

In association with



WIN A £25 TACKLE VOUCHER

Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from **Fishingmegastore.com** which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ **HOW TO ENTER:** We prefer digital photographs sent by email to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk. Please include the details listed on the form (right). Prints can be sent by post with the form.



YOUNG RODS ENTRY FORM

First name: _____

Surname: _____

Age: _____

Daytime tel: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Type of fish: _____

Date caught: _____

Caught at: _____

Weight: _____

Bait: _____

Rig/tackle: _____

Shore ☐

Charter boat ☐

Private boat ☐

Boat name: _____

Skipper: _____

Port: _____

My fish was returned ☐

Not returned ☐

I enclose an SAE ☐

Post to...

Young Rods, Sea Angler magazine, Bauer Media, Media House, Lynchwood, Peterborough PE2 6EA. I have the permission of my parent/guardian for my picture to be used by Sea Angler (tick box) ☐

Yes please, keep me up to date via email with the latest news and special offers from Sea Angler ☐

Please do let us keep in contact so we make sure you don't miss out. You can unsubscribe at any time from any email we send you via the unsubscribe link or emailing dataprotectionofficer@bauermedia.co.uk

For our privacy policy go to <http://www.bauerdatapromise.co.uk>

Bauer Media Group consists of Bauer Consumer Media Ltd, Bauer Radio Ltd and H Bauer Publishing



While fishing at Portstewart harbour in Northern Ireland, **Lucas Wilson**, aged four, from Belfast, caught this codling estimated to be 2lb. The young angler fished with lugworms under a float rig.



Cara Fon, aged nine, caught this thornback ray while fishing from a rock mark on Anglesey, North Wales. The angler, from Llanrwst, presented pulley rig with half a mackerel for bait and released the fish without weighing.



Six-year-old **Riley Mowatt**, from Aberdeen, recently travelled to the harbour in Peterhead. He quickly started to catch coalfish, and often two at a time.



Fishing aboard charter vessel Sea Juicer, skippered by Andy Snow out of Portsmouth, Hants, **James Smith** caught this 30lb conger eel. The 10-year-old, from Reading, presented a mackerel and squid cocktail on a flowing trace.

SeaAngler
MONTHLY
WINNER

MY FISHING DIARY

ADVENTURES OF A JUNIOR SHORE ANGLER

Eight-year-old Tyneside angler Harley Thompson gives an account of his latest shore fishing trip...

I REALLY ENJOY competition fishing and, living in the North East, there's always an open event to enter and test my skills. The first match of the year in Northumberland is the Amble Open and it always attracts a huge entry.

Tickets were on sale in local tackle shops before the match, and both my dad and me got ours in advance. This is perfect because it gives everyone taking part the chance to prepare and get to their chosen mark early.

I'd made my mind up early and decided to venture to a new venue for me at Warkworth beach. It's a picturesque, sandy mark, with a few rocky outcrops and is perfect for targeting flounders.

The match is always fished over low water and, coinciding with a bit of flood tide, it offers everyone a decent opportunity to target some extremely productive venues.

I arrived early and noticed a rocky platform that looked ideal for casting my baited rigs right behind the surf. I've learned that flounders love to feed in the edge and if I got my tactics just right, I'd surely be in with a chance of catching a fish or two.

As with all popular open matches, it wasn't long before other competitors started to arrive around us, so any bites today would have to be dealt with perfectly...I didn't want to share my quarry with these guys.

My choice of bait and rigs was frozen black lug that would be tipped with a choice of fish baits and presented on a long two-hook flapper rig armed with size 4 Kamasan B940 hooks.

I aimed my first cast only 20 yards into



Fishing close behind the surf is a good ploy for catching flounders

the surf with a simple overhead lob. Within minutes my rod tip started to rattle so I decided to bait a spare trace and let the bite develop.

After only 10 minutes I reeled in my first flounder, placed it in my bucket of water and cast my spare trace into the same spot.

To prevent too many flounders being returned to the weigh-in, the size limit was increased to 27cm – this fish was just under the line, so I quickly returned it back to the sea.

Another bite and another undersize flattie followed, but I knew sooner or later a better one would come along. Sure enough, a good pull on the rod tip saw me reeling in

my first keeper at 31cm, I was off the mark.

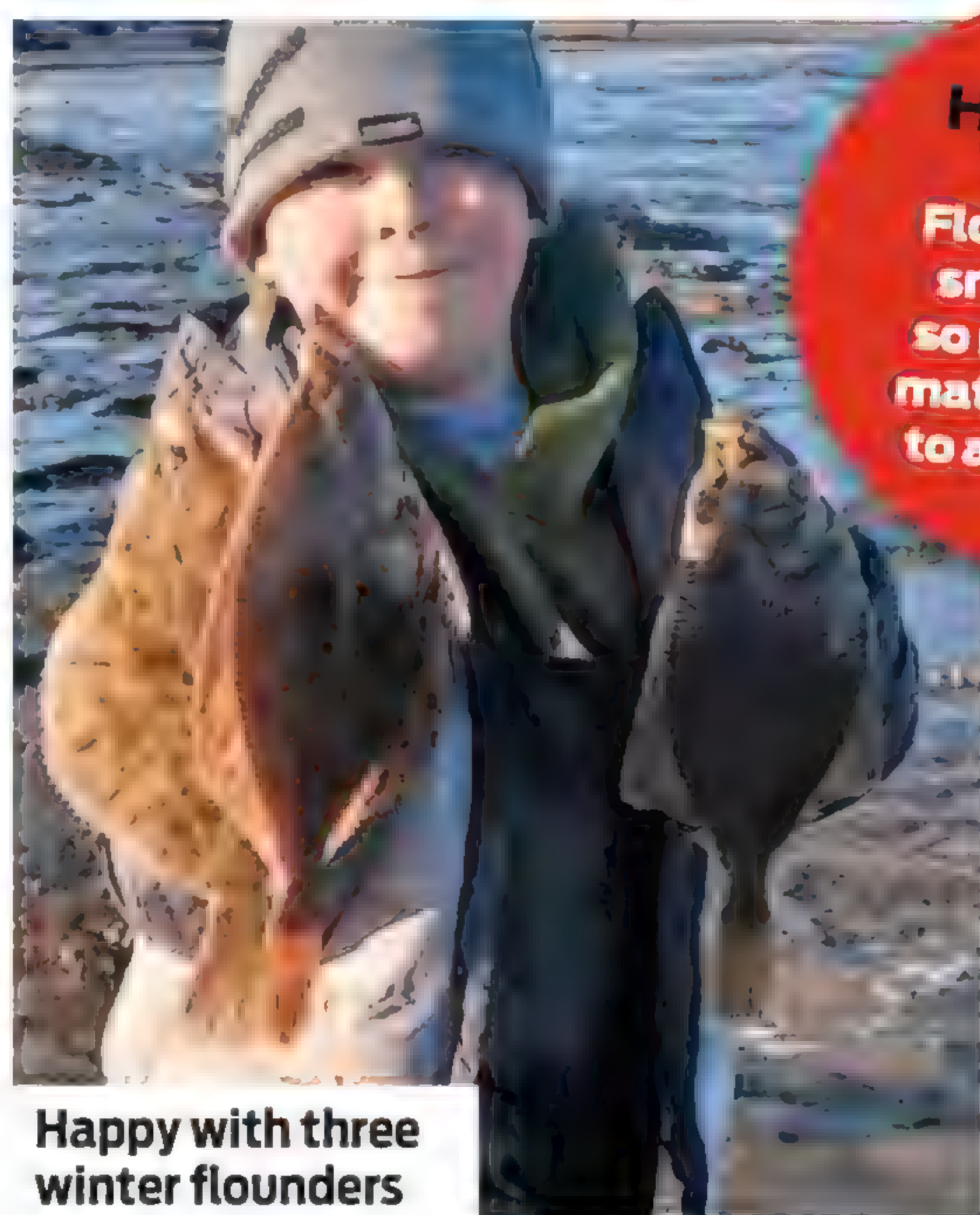
Time was ticking on and I was catching flounders that were frustratingly just under the 27cm size limit. I know to keep working hard and the better fish come eventually.

The match finished and I was happy that I had three sizeable fish to take back. I kept them alive in water so I could return them after they had been weighed.

I didn't win, but I was happy to get on the prize table to pick up 30 watch leads, a woollen hat and some tackle box stickers.

All in all, it was a great event, I learned loads more and I'm really looking forward to my next fishing session. ■

It's important to have an accurate measuring stick



Happy with three winter flounders

HARLEY'S TOP TIP
Flounders have small mouths so make sure to match your baits to a small hook.



This eelpout was not allowed so went back

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BOAT ANGLER

19 pages of advice, tips and tactics for fishing afloat





Words and
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DAVE LEWIS

Storm beaters

As a seemingly endless stream of bad weather hit the country, a day afloat was a distant memory. Then there came a short window of opportunity...

Skipper Haydn
Ross – weather
watcher and
spurdog ace

IN RECENT MONTHS, LIKE SO MANY other offshore anglers, I was starting to suffer from a bout of what the Americans refer to as 'The Shack Nasties'. I'd lost count of the number of cancelled boat trips due to the stormy weather and had got to the stage when I could be barely bothered to look at the weather forecasts in the hope of some respite from the constant succession of approaching low pressure systems, each one bringing even more strong winds and rain.

Out of the blue I received a phone call from Haydn Ross, skipper of Tuskar 2, based in Cardiff Bay, who had identified a possible weather window. The tides were favourable and he was planning to go fishing.

"Would you like to join me along with a few mutual friends on a mid-channel trip?" he asked. Naturally, I jumped at the opportunity to get out on a boat at last.

It was a good decision because Haydn's weather-forecasting skills proved to be spot-on, with the morning of our trip dawning with only the slightest hint of a westerly breeze. The forecast suggested that conditions would start to go downhill in the afternoon, but this still gave us a perfect eight to 10-hour weather window.

The mark was located a few miles north of Foreland Point. It's an area of broken ground, in around 100 feet of water that, based on previous trips, I knew could turn up a large number of fish, many of a high average size. Catches typically consist of bull huss, conger eels, rays, the odd cod, and (love them or hate them) spurdogs.

With the anchor set, a dozen or so large and juicy scent-enriched baits were either cast uptide or simply dropped over the side, rods placed against the gunnels before we sat back to see how the fish would respond. ►



Andy Samuel with an angry bull huss

HUSS FOR STARTERS

I had predicted that we would get bites more or less immediately, and for once I was not wrong. Barely two minutes after one of his baits had arrived at the seabed, Andy Samuel announced he had the first bite. After giving the fish plenty of time to fully eat the large bait, he picked up the nodding rod, reeled the line tight, and set the hook on what clearly was a very reasonable fish. Minutes later Haydn scooped an angry bull huss out of the swiftly ebbing water.

From that point the fish came aboard in a steady succession, I honestly don't think that we went as long as 10 minutes without someone landing a fish. Often Haydn had to deal with double and triple catches of huss and congers, a lot of which weighed well into double figures. If you like a day of constant rod-bending action, these are the perfect boat trips for you.

It didn't seem to matter what bait was used, something down in those cold and murky waters was going to eat it. We had brought with us a selection of frozen mackerel, Bluey and squid, which were fished as cocktails of two or three of these ingredients. One advantage with this style of fishing is that compared to a day concentrating exclusively on cod, which requires having to buy

large quantities of expensive fresh worms, crabs or shellfish, this was a very affordable day out as far as bait was concerned.

Rigs need involve nothing more than a simple running leger, typically terminating in a Pennell consisting of a pair of sharp, strong, size 5/0-7/0 hooks. For many years I have used Sakuma 545 Manta Extras, and I have no plans to change.

A mistake a lot of anglers on their first



Ceri Thomas is delighted with his huss



Leighton Newbury takes the strain

trip to the Bristol Channel make is in using hooklengths that are too light, and subsequently not anywhere near up to the job. A combination consisting of a sizeable fish and a fast tide puts considerable pressure on every tackle component. Inadequate hooklengths are usually the first component to fail. Add a few razor-sharp teeth to the equation, such as those found in spurdogs, and failure is inevitable.

As a standard for cod, smoothhounds and rays, do not use anything weaker than 60lb or, better still, 80lb monofilament. If spurdogs are on the cards you should raise the bar higher, and use at least 100lb, or even 150lb mono.

None of the fish you will be targeting are going to shy off from taking a bait rigged to a heavy hooklength, so why take risks?

SPUR TIME

Given the huge number of baits our crew were using, plus the fact that the large numbers of fish we were catching ensured that these baits were continually being refreshed, it was only a matter of time before the spurdogs located us.

After about an hour's fishing they showed up, and once again it was Andy who boated the first one. It was an average size fish of around 8-10lb, but even so, given the two sharp spurs located one in front of each dorsal fin, it was easily capable of causing a nasty injury if the fish was not handled correctly. These spines are not venomous, but the deep and painful puncture



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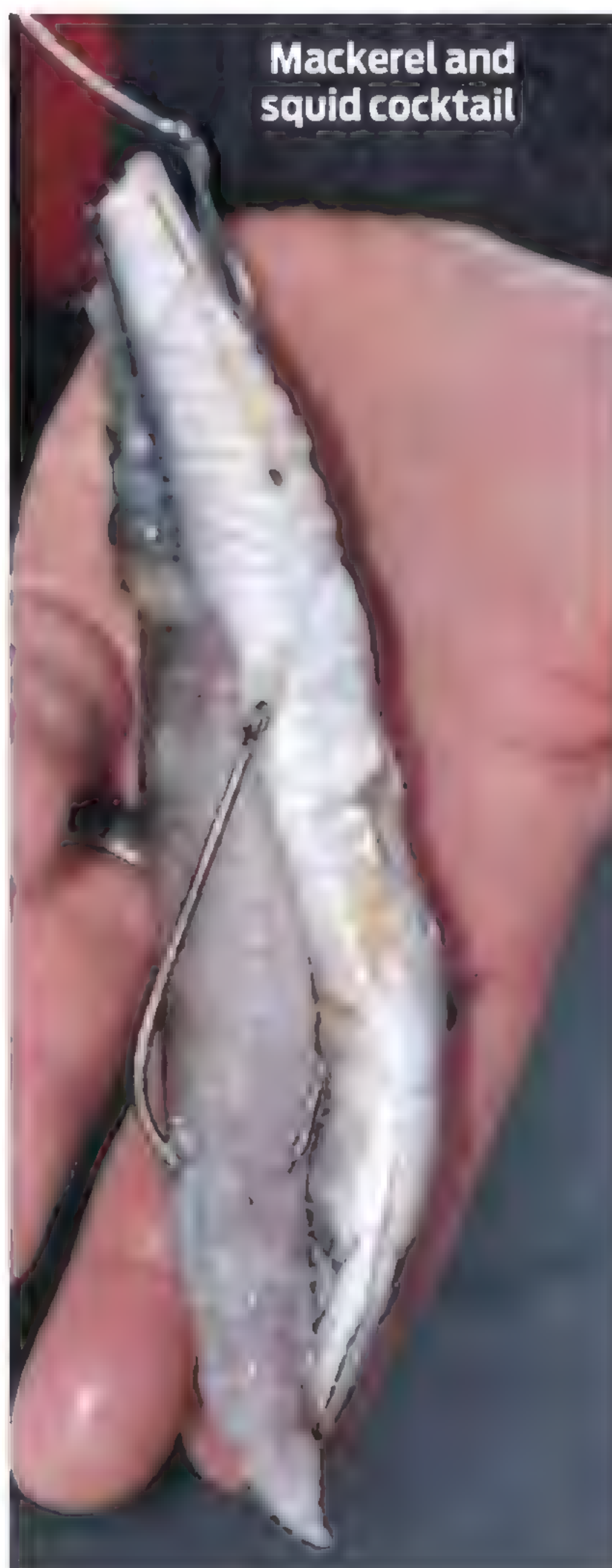
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Junior Ross gets in on the spur action

wounds they typically inflict can, and often do, become infected.

Throughout the remainder of our day everyone continued to catch plenty of fish. We experienced a slight lull in bites over the short low-water period, but as soon as the flood tide started to push its way into the channel, the fish came back on the feed with a vengeance. With the strongly flooding tide demanding the use of ever heavier amounts of lead weight to keep a bait nailed to the seabed, eventually things got to the stage where a quick show of hands confirmed we had all had enough.

The window of opportunity to fish these mid-channel marks on all but the smallest tides is restricted to just a couple of hours over slack water, which is why historically they were rarely fished. These days, though, and especially during spurdog season, roughly December to April, you'll likely find several other boats fishing the area on suitable days. These boats travel from both Welsh and English ports. More likely than not, if you take time to see what is happening aboard any other boat, it will not be too long before you witness the skipper leaning over the side to land yet another sizeable fish.



Andy Samuel boated the first spurdog



FALL AND RISE OF SPURDOGS

When I started boat fishing throughout the 1970s and 1980s, spurdogs – junior members of the shark family – were so prolific in the Bristol Channel that at times if you wanted your bait to remain in the water long enough to catch a different species, the only option was to move.

Even then, on many days it would only be a matter of time before the swarms of ravenous fish would turn up and devour any bait you cared to drop over the side. As a result, spurdogs are not one of my favourite UK species to catch – and that's putting it politely.

A popular food fish, the spurdog is the original rock salmon. Given the incentive of a decent market price during the late 1980s and 1990s, commercial fishing decimated the species throughout much of its range. Consequently, it was many years before I saw, let alone caught, another spurdog here in South Wales.

In the early years of the new Millennium, reports emerged of boat anglers starting

to encounter large numbers of spurs. At the time, a drastic reduction in cod had forced charter skippers to venture farther afield in search of something for their crews to catch. During late winter and spring, each month on the smaller tides a few boats started fishing the deep mid-channel marks south of the Nash Sandbank, an area which historically was rarely targeted by anglers.

It was here that ever-increasing numbers of spurs were caught, and on some days catches in excess of 100 fish per charter boat were reported; the sort of numbers that would have had cod anglers crying into their bait buckets.

By now there was a new generation of boat angler, those who had missed the great years of South Wales cod fishing and were more than happy to experience the sort of session that a ravenous pack of spurs can produce. Now we have what has become a spurdog season.

How things change! ■



Fish on!

NEED TO KNOW

Tuskar 2 is based at Cardiff Bay Marina and is licensed for up to 12 passengers. Bookings range from four hours to multiple days, including two-day trips to Lundy Island. Contact skipper Haydn Ross, tel: 07710 234816.



Another spurdog, this time for Glyn Pressley



Jigging for bream

With the summer species hitting our shores and better weather making it easier to get afloat, here's how to target black bream on jigs and soft plastics



Mission accomplished!
A bream on a jig

The fight on this ultra-light gear was intense



EVER SINCE I STARTED USING ULTRA-light tackle from a boat, I've always looked forward to the arrival of the UK species that puts up as good a fight as any for its size. Over the years I've caught countless bream to just under 6lb, but it really doesn't matter if I hook into a 5lb fish or a one-pounder, they all fight like demons on the kind of kit I like to use.

A few years ago I picked up a handful of Daiwa Gekkabijin LRF lures and jigs at the company's trade show and I have been using them ever since with great success. I've already caught a whole host of species on them, from mackerel and pollack to gurnards, wrasse and even bass, so I figured that if I played my cards right I could tempt a bream or two on them.

On the first trip that I tried jigging for black bream I decided to start with the 7g Tsukino Kabura jigs, because there wasn't much tide and we were only fishing in around 50ft of water. That, coupled with the ultralight 2-19g rod I was using would make for some heart-stopping sport if I managed to hook up.

Rigging up was as simple as it gets. It was just a case of tying the jig directly to the end of my leader, which was 8ft of 10lb fluorocarbon that I had tied to my 8lb braid mainline.

After a good half hour of playing around with the jig, I had nothing to show for my efforts. There were definitely bream down there because the other lads on the boat were catching them on their squid baits. I needed to go back to the drawing board.

I figured that the only way I was going to tempt a bream was to offer them something soft and attractive like a strip of squid, and it was then that I remembered the pack of Gekkabijin Curly Beam lures in my tackle box.

CONFIDENCE IS KING

Before I attempted the soft plastic approach, I had a couple of drops with a piece of squid – just to get a fish in the boat and to restore my confidence that I wasn't going to be having one of 'those days'. After just a few minutes I had a plump 1lb 8oz bream stripping line from the drag – job done! I was in the right place and I had my first bream in the coolbox.

The first problem I came up against when I tried to mount the Curly Beam on to the jig was that all the feathers on the jig got in the way and wouldn't allow me to thread the soft plastic lure up the hook shank. That wouldn't work at all, so I just bit off about two-thirds of the lure body and threaded what was left of the body and curly tail on the hook.

The great thing about most soft plastics is that they are designed to allow you to cut them down to suit every possible situation you encounter. And this was one such situation where a bit of trimming was required.

GREAT TECHNIQUE

The best way to catch using this method is to work the jig and lure back in the tide to find the fish. Give the jig a little flick out and wait until you feel it bounce on the rocky seabed below. Then just give the rod tip a couple of jigs towards you, and drop it back again with a little more line, each time sending the jig a few ►



feet further back in the tide. This method allows you to really cover the ground behind the boat. You can easily bounce the jig back about 50ft or 60ft, and then wind it back in and repeat the process.

There's something special about being connected directly to a feisty fish without a lead weight swinging about mid trace, which I guess is why I love fishing with lures so much.

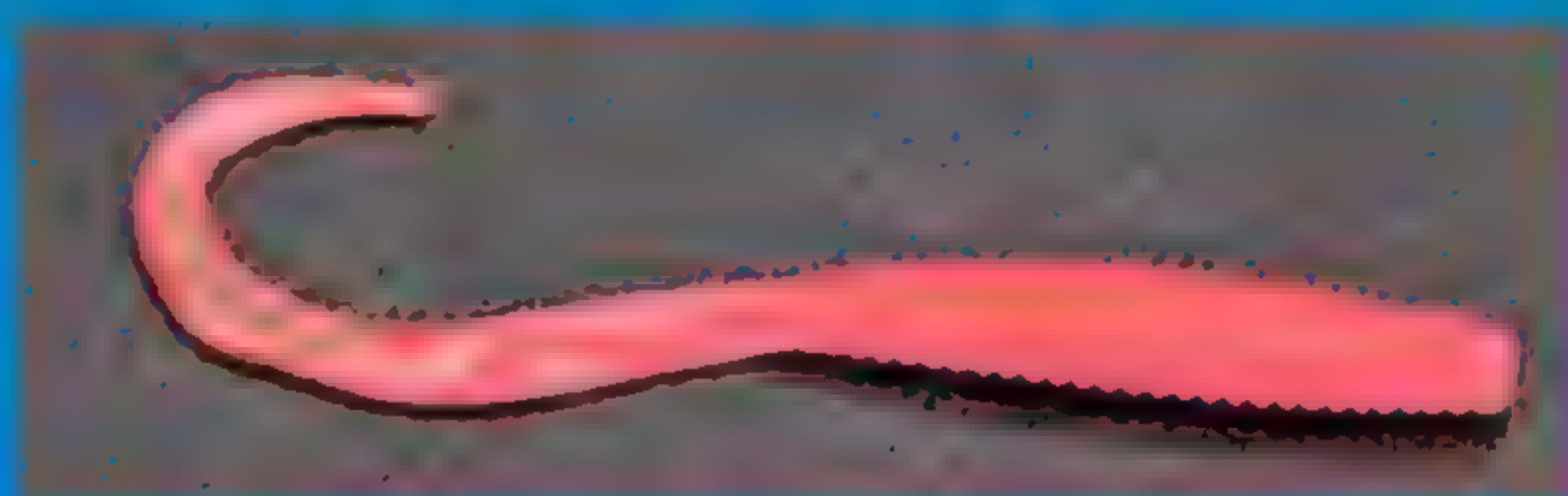
The first bream I hooked on this method went mental, and it swam right up to the boat, and then attempted to swim uptide. I piled on the pressure and, as the bream kited to my right, it turned in a flash and headed back downtide, pulling line from my reel in the process. After a dogged couple of minutes I placed the net under a beautiful 2lb bream and lifted it into the boat.

I had a pretty cheesy grin on my face while the pictures were being taken. The sense of satisfaction was evident. Shortly afterwards another two-pounder hit the net, and I'd proven to myself that it's possible to catch bream on lures alone. Yes, you need the right conditions to fish in this way, but when it all comes together there really is nothing more satisfying than catching bream on lures.



Chuffed with my first bream on a jig

ALL ABOUT THE LURES



GEKKABIJIN CURLY BEAM

Like jellyworms in miniature, the Curly Beam is one of my favourites from this range. I've used them to great effect for gurnards, pollack, wrasse, poor cod and black bream.

They measure two inches long and feature a ribbed body with a thin, curly tail, which vibrates with even the most minimal movement.

I've found them to be extremely effective when used on a tiny jighead, producing a number of takes coming on the drop as the lure makes its way to the seabed. The best way to work one of these lures on a jighead is to use the sink-and-draw technique, or to simply bump them over the seabed.

If you don't have any tiny jigheads, try tying a size 12 hook to the end of your trace line and then add a small split shot directly above the hook.

Each lure is impregnated with an amino acid formula to make them even more attractive. More importantly, these lures are manufactured to be 'green', with no plasticizer suspected of harming the environment being used in their

manufacture.

They are available in six colours, some of which glow in the dark – Glow White, Glow Pink, Glittery Clear, Dark Green Tea, Amber and Lumi Green Tea.

GEKKABIJIN TSUKINO KABURA

These feather jigs

are always in my lure bag. They're really well made and have a host of features that make them attractive to a wide range of species.

There are three different-coloured heads available, each with fish skin, feathers and tinsel built into the bodies. The 'mackerel' fish skin is the first attractor,



and it naturally reflects light. The skin has been cut and positioned to 'catch' the water as the lure sinks, so that it doesn't plummet headfirst – instead it falls slowly and helps the lure glide down.

Then there are the feathers, which compress to create a small fish shape once wet. The tinsel strips have been added to imitate an injured baitfish, and with all three attractors working together you can see why these jigs are so deadly.

They have a fantastic 'wobbling' action when you use the jerk or jerk retrieve method, but the lures remain stable when simply falling through the water. You can either use the sink-and-draw method, or just bounce them along the seabed.

They come in either 5g or 7g weights in Red, Green and Glow colours. ■

Epic skate haul

Top skipper's two weeks of angling mayhem

SIX ANGLERS WHO SPENT TWO DAYS fishing for big skate off the west coast of Scotland landed 25 huge fish to 225lb.

The group from Wales and the Midlands, calling themselves Team Mongrel, consisted of Elliot Robinson, Aled Nicholas, Alan Larrad, Alyx Jones, John Frayne and Jason Taylor. They were fishing with skipper Kevin McKie, on Buoy Alba, out of Croabh Haven, Argyll. Kevin normally operates out of Liverpool and Plymouth, but for the last two years has spent a few weeks at the Craignish Peninsula, Scotland, seeking out the big skate.

Fishing in 450ft of water in some very tough weather, the group caught and released 21 female skate from 139lb to 225lb and four males from 111lb to 142lb. Total weight was 4,377lb.

"The conditions were tough as we endured wind, rain, sleet, hail, snow and occasional sun, but what a fantastic experience and one that I'll definitely be doing again," said Elliott Robinson, from Wales.

They used Shimano Tiagra 30 reels loaded with 80lb braided mainline and Shimano Tyrnos 50/80lb-class rods supplied by the skipper. Rigs were running legers made from 600lb mono with detachable booms, 5lb of lead weight, and size 14/0 bronzed O'Shaughnessy hooks. Their big baits consisted of squid, octopus and mackerel, while constant bait changing kept up a good scent trail.

EXTREME CARE

Fishing in some very tough weather conditions, the 225lb skate fell to John Frayne, from Worcestershire, who described the fishing as "epic". The best male skate of 142lb fell to Aled Nicholas, from Wales. Jason Taylor, from Birmingham, who had never caught a fish before had a first skate of 206lb followed by another 199lb. Elliot Robinson, from Wales, caught five skate from 139lb to 188lb.

Elliot added: "The skipper Kev McKie was superb and knew his stuff. He was in Scotland for a few weeks and using a boat named Buoy Alba. All the fish were kept wet at all times and were only onboard for a few minutes and handled with extreme care."

At the start of his time in Scotland, skipper Kevin hosted a group from Devon, who caught 17 female fish from 160lb to 211lb, along with four males from 91lb to 110lb. The total weight was 3,506lb.

His final party was a group from Norway. No strangers to big fish, they caught more than 30 females weighing from 76lb to 208lb, and five males to 126lb. Total weight was 7,211lb. ■





Buying a used boat

What to look for to avoid a whole
load of extra costs

THERE IS AN OFT-QUOTED ADAGE USUALLY BROUGHT UP WHENEVER the subject of buying a boat is discussed. It states: "If you can't afford to stand in a cold shower ripping up £20 notes, then perhaps owning your own boat is not for you?"

I'm sure you understand the inference of those words, but buying a secondhand boat, engine and trailer package is a great way to assess the accuracy of it.

Not only are there some great bargains to be had in the secondhand market, but also there are plenty of others that can end up costing you considerably more than you had intended, or could afford to pay.

Rather than drawing from my own experiences, I enlisted the help of someone who has considerable knowledge of purchasing secondhand boats, either for cash or as a part-exchange unit when the owner decides to change boats.

Robin Willis (right) owns Cambrian Boat Centre, a company in Swansea that for many years has specialised in selling all sorts of boats, especially trailerable angling vessels. I asked him what he looked for when considering a deal that involved taking in what car sales staff, somewhat tongue in cheek, refer to as a 'preloved' package.



Many anglers will be looking for a boat, engine and trailer package





THOROUGH LOOKING OVER

"The first thing to do is give the boat a thorough looking over. Check that everything fitted works, especially any onboard electrics or electronics that will be included in the package," he explained as we walked around Cambrian's extensive boatyard. "Look inside all lockers and, if possible, try to look below the main deck, checking for signs of water ingress. If you find any water, try to determine exactly how it has got in."

With a secondhand boat this might be nothing more than a faulty locker seal letting in rainwater, but water could also be leaking in from below the waterline, which clearly is potentially far more serious, and possibly costly to rectify.

"Small chips in the boat's gelcoat caused from launching and retrieving or coming alongside a bit too quick might look unsightly, but more often than not these are easily and quickly repaired," said Robin. "Stress fractures to the hull caused from many miles of towing using a badly fitting trailer, unsympathetic boat handling in heavy seas or simply manufacturing



Check any onboard electrics or gadgetry



Patches of rust like this are hard to miss



Chips in the gelcoat can be easy to repair

defects are a different matter altogether. All of the boats we take in get thoroughly pressure washed followed by a full valet. If the hull has been anti-fouled, if necessary we renew this." ►



Water has found its way into this locker

ENGINE COSTS

Clearly, the cost of an outboard engine makes up a considerable percentage of the overall value of any package, and if an engine does have any faults, putting these right could very easily run into four figures.

Cambrian Marine has its own team of qualified marine mechanics, who ensure that every engine being considered for purchase gets a good looking over.

Robin added: "Obviously we check that the engine starts and runs smoothly, with a strong jet of cooling water discharging to confirm an efficient cooling system.

"An intermittent or non-existent cooling water discharge could simply indicate that the impeller in the water pump needs replacing, which is an easy enough job to rectify at little cost. But it could also be a result of blockages within the cooling system, which generally is not good news."

Check the operation of the gears and throttle because it is far from uncommon for the original cables to become stiff and worn with use or lack of use. Check the trim and tilt works and the propeller for signs of corrosion or damage.

"Next, check the engine oil, taking note of its colour, looking for signs of emulsification caused by water leaking through a faulty head gasket, which is a clear indication of more serious problems, and expensive repairs.

"Remove each spark plug in turn, and check the cylinder compressions. This is the easiest way to identify excessive mechanical wear. Just because the outside of an engine is bright and shiny, indicating the engine has been well looked after, it doesn't automatically follow that it hasn't been abused, or that regular servicing has been neglected.

"Each engine we do take in receives a full service from us before it is resold, we include a three-month warranty with all of our resold engines, which offers the buyer a lot of peace of mind."

If you are interested in purchasing the boat, suggest that the vendor has the engine checked over by a qualified marine mechanic. If this examination proves positive, simply add the cost of it to the agreed purchase price, it'll be money well spent. If the report is not good, then you retain the option to walk away without paying.



It looks good, but putting faults right can be costly



Make sure the trim and tilt mechanism works properly



The engine bracket should be secure on the transom



The outside of an engine might look good, but that doesn't mean it's been well looked after



Good and bad propellers (below and right)



Suggest the vendor gets a qualified marine mechanic to assess the engine's performance and condition



Damage to the boat's hull, caused by an impact or from a badly fitting trailer, can be expensive and time consuming to repair



Cast your eye over the wheel rims and tyres



Check the condition of the trailer rollers



The rubber could be perished or have a split



This winch looks a bit worse for wear

THE TRAILER

Road trailers require frequent servicing, more so than engines. If trailers are not washed off thoroughly after each immersion in saltwater, and certain major components stripped and correctly lubricated, then corrosion will very quickly take hold, even on a trailer that has been galvanised.

At best, this could result in a breakdown, causing a major inconvenience and possible missed fishing trip. At worst, a catastrophic failure of a major component while towing at speed on the road, resulting in serious damage to your boat or engine. If any accident involves a third party and a subsequent accident investigation determines that the trailer was at fault due to neglect, it could end with a charge of culpable manslaughter.

Start by giving the trailer a complete lookover, highlighting any patches of rust. These might be nothing more than just surface corrosion

requiring a bit of attention with a wire brush and a lick of paint. More serious cases of long-term corrosion can affect the structural integrity of the trailer and require welding, or even the complete replacement of sections in order to make the trailer road-worthy.

If a package includes a trailer fitted with brakes – a legal requirement if the gross towing weight exceeds 750kg – it is essential to confirm that these are working. Often brakes on secondhand boat trailers will not be operating at anything like 100 per cent efficiency.

In some cases, the interior workings on the hubs will have become so problematic to maintain, that the previous owner will have removed them. Not only does this result in breaking the law if the boat is towed on public roads, but it can be costly to put right.

Wheel bearings are the other big issue with trailers, especially when it has been used to launch a boat into saltwater. Bearings are not

especially expensive to replace, but, in bad cases, corrosion or a seized bearing can mean irreparable damage to the inside of the wheel hubs, which will require replacing.

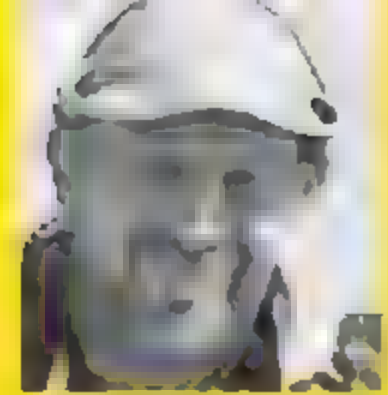
Obviously, it is important to check the condition of wheel rims and tyres. Likewise, check the condition of the trailer winch, jockey wheel and all rollers. Most of these components are easily replaced at reasonable cost, but lots of little costs quickly add up. You can use any faults to your advantage when haggling over the final price of the package. ■

NEED TO KNOW

A big thanks to Cambrian Boat Centre (tel: 01792 467263) for its help in preparing this advice.

■ Email sales@cambrianboats.com

■ Website: www.cambrianboats.com



Shake off the cobwebs

Having managed only a few fishing trips, it was time for some early spring sessions

IT SEEMED LIKE A LOT OF THINGS HAD conspired against me to produce some missed opportunities. Mostly these were weather-related, including such factors as uncomfortable seas, wind making the launches too hairy, and rain, all coinciding with my few free days.

With local reports from charter friends, beach fishermen and other kayak anglers all pointing to a lack of any fish worth catching, it left me at a bit of a loose end.

I'd caught four cod the last time out, all of a decent stamp, before the weather went bad again, but a couple of sessions within a week were possible and with Amos Mak available to join me for the first, and James Leech on the second, it was all go for a trip out of Corton, in Suffolk.

Amos and I were not properly organised, resulting in various bits and pieces being forgotten and some swapping of bait and tackle to ensure that we could scratch around for something to bring home for tea. The weather finally warming up pointed to the standard tackle off here – 12lb-class rods, 60z

breakout weights and 3ft size 2/0 running leger rigs. If cod were still lingering and the thornbacks had come inshore, we would be equipped to catch them. If a surprise bass or smoothhound put in a showing, they'd all be coming aboard, if only for a brief visit.

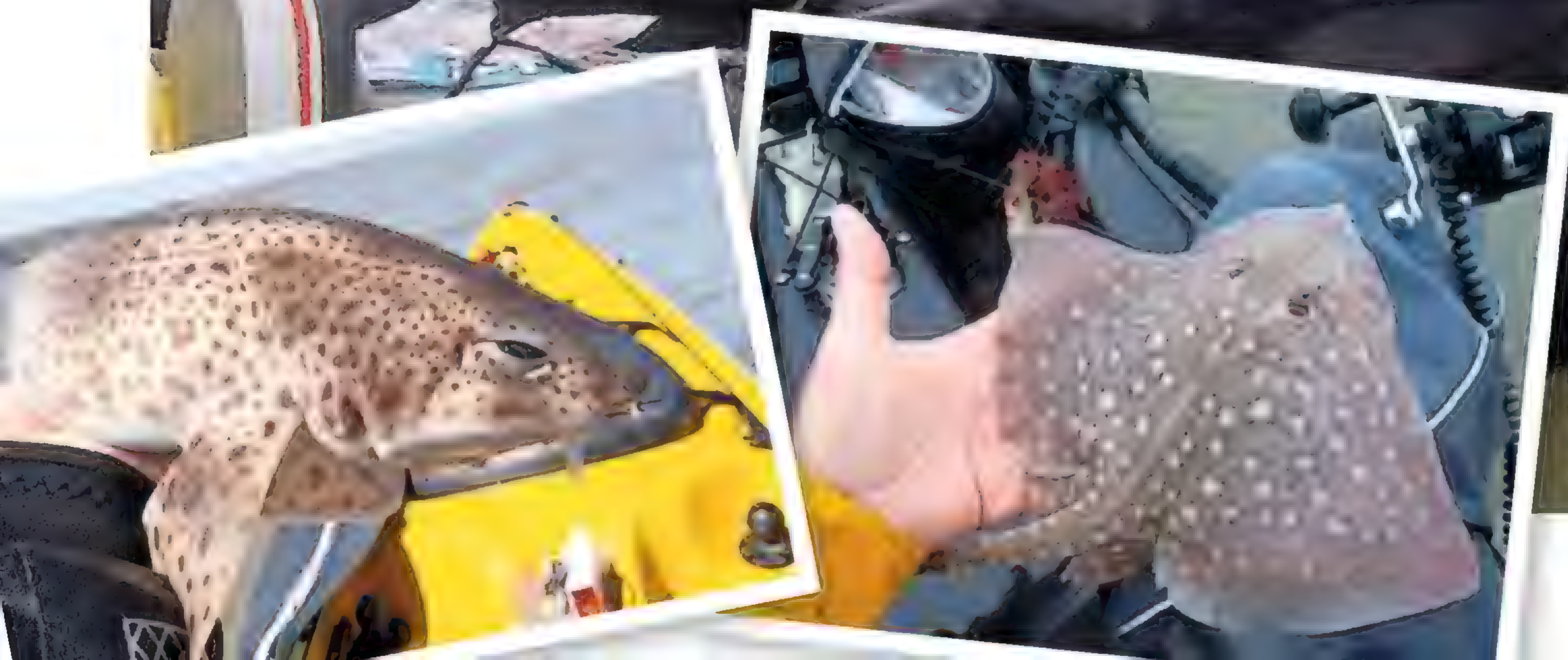
FRUSTRATION

The usual plan here is to launch around two hours before high or low water to allow the fastest part of the tide to pass through and begin to ease off towards slack water, which usually follows an hour or so later. This gives a decent three-hour session before it's time to pull anchor safely and paddle home.

Fishing a quarter-of-a-mile or so out and a similar distance downtide from the launch point makes the paddle easy, and the spot chosen is one shown on the charts as foul ground. To be honest, that's a bit of an exaggeration because it's not generally snaggy, unless there have been some heavy seas to disturb the drifting sand.

Out we went, Amos and I both starting with frozen black lug tipped with squid, a standard

Amos Mak was happy with an easy paddle



Far left: First dogfish of the year...summer is on its way
Left: A small thornback ray for Mark Crame

bait for the fishing here. With anchors down the 35ft or so, and 150ft of warp let out to give a smooth ride, we cast the baits, with a rod each side as the water ran hard around us. It wasn't long before the first missed bite. Or the second and subsequent ones.

Snatch bites were all we were seeing, a quick dip of the rod tip, maybe a second or third following, but nothing connecting. Such frustration. The fish were clearly around, but it was at least an hour before anything started to show any proper interest.

The first fish was a whiting, which was returned. A couple more followed as the tide eased before a firmer pull produced something heavier and stronger on the end. Up against the tide came the first dogfish of the year – a sign that summer is on its way!

Now, they might be bait robbers if all you want is something else, but they're a fish I do enjoy catching and seeing. I also enjoy eating them from time to time, but I was rather hoping to get something more substantial.

Sure enough, after the first half-dozen dogs and a change to whole squid, there was a different bite and a different pull on the end of my line.

It felt like a decent fish, pulling hard and exerting some pressure, but this was as much from the tide as anything else. Once it finally broke surface and skated along the top to my waiting hand, I unhooked and returned a small thornback ray. Maybe there'd be a better one along shortly...but there wasn't.

Plenty more dogs arrived, though, along with some good whiting to 1lb or so, but by this time the sun, wind and swell, along with slack water, made it an easy decision to haul the anchor and head to shore for an easy landing and the long drag up the hill.

GOOD SPORT

For the next session, James was inspired by the tales of a ray appearing, but he had become a bit more refined and bought himself a Warrior boat to fish from, so I'd be launching my kayak solo. He'd join me out on the water, fishing with his dad, Gordon.

Anchoring up in a strong tide was fine, but the wind changed direction and picked up, bringing a following sea that was quite uncomfortable. Being picked up by fairly hefty swells isn't a massive issue, but when some of them start to break around or on you, it's a bit of an annoyance.

I was glad I was in my kayak, though, as James and his dad were pitching and rolling a lot more than I was, and it looked uncomfortable. There's a lot to be said for floating above the swells like a cork in something light with minimal draft.

I'd had four dogfish before they had a sniff and then a ray came up. A small one again, so back over the side and then they started getting a few dogfish too. Finally Gordon came up trumps, pulling up a nice thornback of around 5lb. At least we had something to show for our efforts.

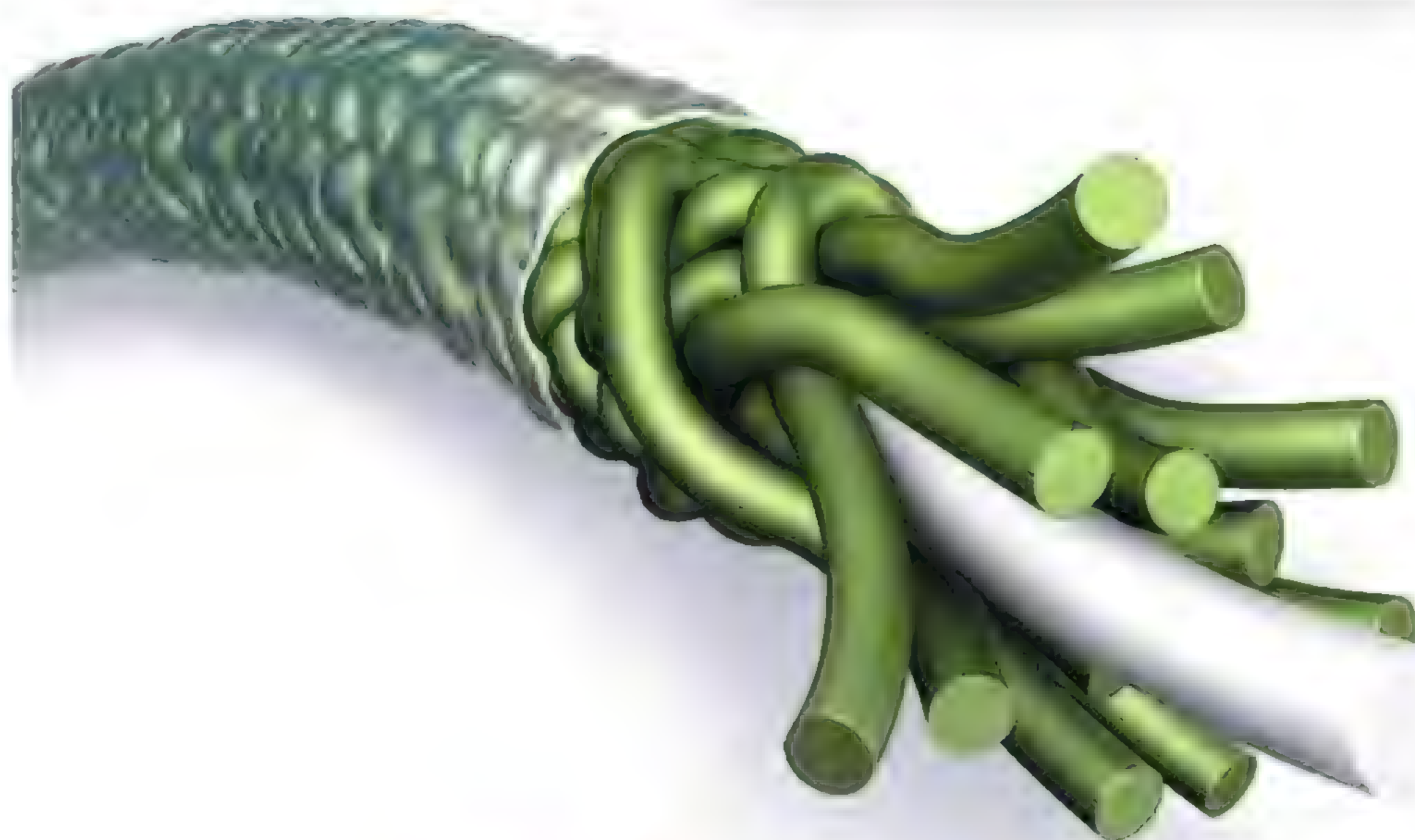
The sea was getting bumpier as time went on, which wasn't helped when a large survey vessel passed inshore of us. With slack almost upon us, I decided it was time to haul anchor. James took that as a signal for him to go home too.

Nothing for my dinner, but a good bit of sport, with twenty or so fish for me and a surf landing. At least I knew the fish had returned and my gear was working faultlessly in spite of the cobwebs. ■

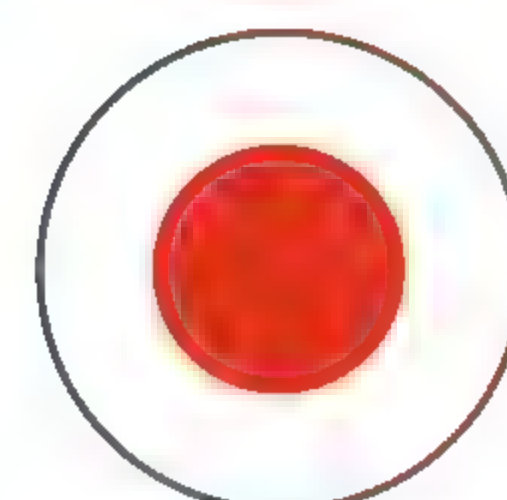


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Red-hot snappers

Pretty fishing it isn't, and it's certainly not recommended for the faint of heart

JUST LIKE THE GIANT TREVALLY, THE immensely powerful cubera snapper is a relative newcomer on the tropical sports fishing stage...and for precisely the same reasons.

Remember, it was not until the 1990s that anglers had the benefit of using super-strong braid lines in conjunction with beautifully machined reels and rods. Such tackle was purpose-designed for fishing with the incredible amount of drag pressure required to successfully subdue these brutish fish.

Of course, cubera used to be caught in those same areas where they are regularly targeted today, but given a combination of monofilament line, which stretched as much as 20 per cent under strain, and rods and reels that really were not up to the task, the vast majority of cubera hooked, especially big cubera, were inevitably lost. This happened more or less immediately when the fish swam directly into the nearest snag.

There are at least two species of cubera snapper – *Lutjanus cyanopterus* found throughout the tropical regions of the Atlantic, notably in the Caribbean, and *Lutjanus novemfasciatus*, also known as the Pacific Cubera.

Compared to other species of snapper, both these species grow large, often very large, with the IGFA record for the Atlantic variety standing at 124lb 12oz – a monster fish caught off Louisiana in 2007. The Pacific variety's record is held with a smaller but equally impressive fish that weighed 78lb 12oz, caught off Costa Rica in 1988.

VARIED TECHNIQUES

As with most species of snapper, cubera are almost always caught in the vicinity of structure, typically submerged rock piles

Modern tackle is
purpose-designed to
subdue the incredibly
powerful snappers



and reefs, hence the necessity to use suitable tackle if you intend to target them.

Very large fish are not infrequently hooked in surprisingly shallow water, and these can be almost impossible to pull into clear water before they reach cover.

At least when fishing deeper water, or when you are able to entice a fish away from cover in order to take a bait or lure, it gives you some chance of landing it. Certainly, fishing for cubera falls under the mantra of hook and hold. Pretty fishing it isn't, and it's certainly not recommended for the faint of heart. An aggressive predator, cubera snappers can be hooked on almost any angling technique. Increasingly, a lot are enticed using surface poppers, especially very large ones with a

deeply cupped face that create a substantial 'bloop' when plunged across the surface. Large stickbaits can be very effective, as can all kinds of jig.

If you do intend using lures or bait to target cubera snappers, it is essential you incorporate the strongest hooks, split rings, links and swivels available. Anything less will result in lost fish.

Livebaits are deadly for cubera. I would go so far as to say that if you swim a livebait across a reef and you don't get a strike, it is likely there are no cubera present. Live blue runners make an excellent bait, and don't be afraid of using a bait that is too large. A few years ago a friend on one of my hosted trips to Costa Rica had a monster cubera attack ►



a dorado he was playing, and the dorado weighed more than 20lb.

Deadbaits and large chunks of bait also work well, but more often than not these quickly attract the attention of unwanted species, such as sharks, trigger fish and a plethora of other reef species.

BEST DESTINATIONS

Given the range of their distribution, there are numerous places where you can successfully target cubera. They can be caught off Florida and most of, if not all, the Caribbean Islands, but the better marks are usually those that are located well away from centres of population.

Cuba is one destination where large cubera are often caught, and I have heard that the many reefs found off the coast of the Guyanas in north-west South America are especially productive.

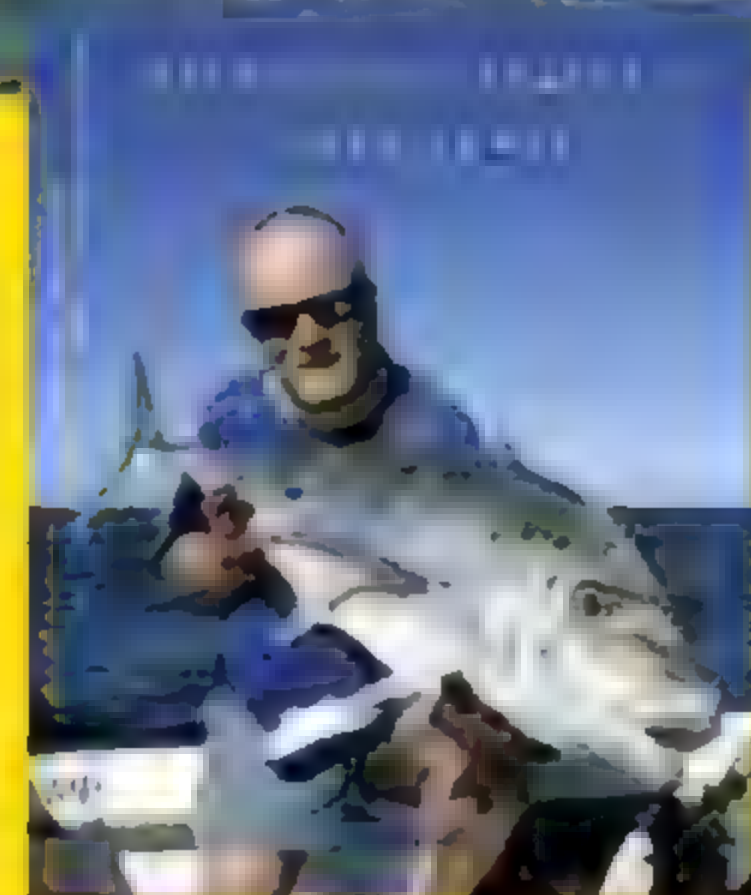
Lodges located along the Pacific coast of both Panama and Costa Rica regularly catch big cubera, including 40lb to 50lb-plus fish, and I have experienced incredible fishing when staying on live-aboard boats in both these countries.

Colombia is rapidly emerging as the new Central American hotspot, and I have seen many pictures of very large cubera snappers caught in this once out of bounds narco state. Indeed, by the time you read this I should be preparing for my first visit to Colombia, a trip where huge cubera snappers are very much on the target list. I'll let you know how I get on.

I host trips to several destinations where we target cubera snappers, along with other popular species.

Contact Anglers World Holidays if you would like to join me, tel: 01246 221717. ■

■ Dave Lewis's recently published book, 'Destination Angler 2', features 26 beautifully illustrated chapters, covering fishing for cubera snappers at several locations, along with many other bucketlist species at destinations around the world. Cost is £30 plus £3.99 p&p to a UK address. Contact: david.lewis21@hotmail.com





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GET INTO BOAT FISHING **PART 11**

PEELER CRABS

Dave Barham explains why a fresh peeler crab is one of his favourite all-year baits



ONE OF the most widely used and sought-after sea baits has to be the peeler crab. It's used extensively by shore and boat anglers from the first moult in early spring around March, through the summer and autumn, and even in the depths of winter.

Perhaps it's because a peeler crab is such a versatile bait that it's always high on most

anglers' bait lists. For instance, you can use a whole crab, without even peeling it, for species such as smoothhounds and bass.

A whole peeled crab will catch you cod, rays, huss and even conger eels, while half a peeled crab whipped to the shank of your hook will tempt big flounders and plaice, plus a whole host of other species including wrasse, gurnards, bream and eels.

Even the legs can be used to great effect once peeled. I like to use them for tipping off baits, such as squid strips or a ragworm when targeting flatfish. I've even used segments of peeled legs on size 14 hooks to tempt mini species in competitions. Some match anglers are going to kill me for telling you this, but gobies and goldsinny wrasse love a segment of peeler crab leg.

SHEDDING SHELLS

Peelers are simply common shore crabs that are in the process of shedding their shells in order to grow larger.

Each spring, and throughout the summer and autumn, peeler crabs can be collected from around the shoreline, often found hiding under rocks and weed beds, which are submerged by water at high tide.



HOW TO FISH A WHOLE CRAB

This presentation is brilliant for smoothhounds. They go mad for it, but because the crab isn't oozing loads of juices like it does once peeled, it helps to keep dogfish and other nuisance species at bay.



Step 1: Pass the point of your hook through the base of the crab, about 10mm up from the bottom.



Step 2: Push the point of the hook up through the shell. That's pretty much it! You can use a little bait elastic to further secure the crab to your hook if you wish.

HOW TO PEEL AND MOUNT A WHOLE PEELER ON A PENNELL RIG

This particular baiting technique is absolutely brilliant for targeting cod, bass and smoothhounds from the shore and boat. It's a very secure, aerodynamic bait that casts well when uptide boat fishing.



Make sure your crab is ready to peel, and you have a size 4/0 Pennell rig ready, along with some fine bait elastic.



Remove all the legs, and then peel away the underside of the shell, taking care to remove the tiny pieces of shell from the leg sockets.



Now turn the crab over and remove the upper part of the shell, like this, to reveal the creature's soft body.

SEA SCHOOL

NEW SERIES: START BOAT FISHING - PART TWO

NEXT MONTH:

Dave reveals his favourite mackerel and sandeel baits for big summer species like tope and rays.



Start by removing the legs. Peel away the underside of the shell, taking care to remove the tiny pieces of shell from the leg sockets.



If you've done it correctly, there shouldn't be a single bit of shell left on the peeled crab, and it should be soft to the touch all over.



Cut the crab in half, but not all the way through. Leave about 10mm at the back of the crab to hold the two segments together.



This is what you want, the crab cut down the middle but still connected and oozing juicy goodness.



To mount the bait, begin by passing your hook point through one of the thick ends of the cut crab. It doesn't matter which side.



Rotate hook 180 degrees, pass through bottom of segment, near join. Repeat at bottom and then at top of other segment.



Both bits of the crab are now on the hook and still joined. Bring top hook down, wrap hooklength around it three or four times.



Pass hook point through the top (thick) section of crab and pull that over the top of the eye of the bottom hook.



To secure the bait to the hooks, start at bend of the bottom hook and wrap your elastic around the bottom piece of crab six times.



Continue to wrap the bait from bottom to the top with elastic. Finish with at least six wraps around the bend of the top hook.



You can peel a few crab legs or claws to help give the bait even more attraction and a more realistic presentation.



Use legs to tip off both hooks if you wish. It's a great tactic when fishing in shallow, clear water for bass.

Words by John Holden

Wind & distance

When the elements are against you, there are a number of ways that you can still conjure up a respectable chuck



Headwinds can rip distance casting to shreds

WE WORK HARD TO CAST well, perhaps spending a small fortune swapping rods, tuning reels and the rest of it. It's worthwhile when you look down the practice field and see how far you're getting.

Then we go fishing on a windy day. Disaster!

Big baits and headwinds are a toxic mix, ripping distance to shreds. The harder we try, the worse it gets.

To give you a rough idea of what wind does, I headed for the field armed with my trusty Daiwa Sandstorm rod and Penn Fathom CS reel. I tied a 150g sinker to the leader. According to the Met Office, the wind was 20mph, gusting 30mph. It felt pretty strong, anyway. Casting with the wind at my normal cruising speed for the beach, I did 148 metres, according to the laser rangefinder.

Casting as before, but with the magnetic control wound down a touch, I aimed straight

into the wind. The cast flew just 111 metres. Then I fixed a table tennis ball on to the leader so that it sat close behind the sinker, as if it were a clipped-down bait. I chose the ball because it looked about the same size as a cod or ray bait - lug and squid, or maybe a chunk of mackerel.

Still into the wind and fighting the natural desire to rip into the cast, I managed 76 metres. Next, with the wind behind me again I managed 118 metres with the ball.

HARD TO BELIEVE

Despite this being a thoroughly unscientific project, it seemed a fair parallel to the results I would expect on the beach; namely a yardage massacre into the wind, and nice flow with the tail wind, even with the ball. You may have noticed that big baits going with a strong tail wind often seem to 'float' through the air as if the bait acted like a sail.

If you're fairly new to beach fishing, the difference between the 148 metres best and the

76 metres worst may be hard to believe. But this is exactly what does happen in beach fishing compared to field work. Smaller baits would perform better, but probably not that much.

What's to be done? Casting harder may help a little, but a full-on blast brings the inevitability of exploding baits and backlashes. I fought the wind for years (don't laugh!), and I lost. These days when the wind is ripping in from the sea, I switch to a 70z (200g) lead weight and throw low, but still at normal cruising speed. I did that to complete my test, and the result was 87 metres, which is a handy boost but hardly impressive.

However, the big bonus is that a 70z sinker with grip wires holds bottom in the powerful waves and currents that accompany a good onshore blow. The usual 150g weight is completely outgunned in seas like that. As for that massive drop in range compared to what we can do on a field, maybe it doesn't matter - the rougher the weather, the closer in fish tend to be. Fifty metres is sometimes too far. ■

Follow all the latest news, catches, photos from Century on www.facebook.com/Century.Sea.Fishing

PART 1

Start saltwater lure angling

For many, this all-action style of fishing becomes a real obsession



STARTING saltwater lure fishing can be a daunting task, and the first couple of years will be the hardest. Some people who don't see immediate results may give up, but it is rewarding when it all clicks.

When I started lure fishing, I had dabbled in a bit of baitfishing with no real success, so I was essentially going in blind. It began in March 2013 and straight away I was hooked. The thrill of the chase kept me going.

My first bass of 2013 took around two months to find, while fishing near my home in South Devon. It was caught on a combination of a beachcasting reel and a boat/beach rod – not the ideal combo for lure fishing, which involves continuous casting and retrieval.

As soon as I had landed that first bass, even though it was the smallest I have seen, I knew I had found a true passion.

I can't explain the feeling that I had after fishing for two months to actually be rewarded with a fish. Now I just wanted more and bigger fish. The journey began.

BASIC KIT

Get only the essential kit and then start fishing. There is no point in buying every bit of equipment if you don't need it.

Start with a rod, reel, line and a selection of hard and soft lures. Visit a lure-specific fishing shop, tell them what you're doing and your price range and they will do the rest.

My first set-up consisted of an Abu Garcia Vendetta 9ft 10-40g rod and a Daiwa Megaforce 2500 reel. These coped with any lure I used and had good sensitivity.

Load your reel with a braided mainline



around the 20lb mark. Line colour is irrelevant. I like a brighter colour, so it is more visible when casting. You need some fluorocarbon for your leader and 16lb or 20lb are good breaking strains.

These are the basics, but where you fish can determine the extra bits you might need. For instance, if fishing from rocks it can be handy to have a long-handled landing net, but if you are in an estuary, a pair of fish grips would be more suitable. You may want a container for your lures, whether it's a backpack, a sling bag, a hip bag, plug belt or small lure box.





WHERE TO FISH

If you're starting from scratch you need to read about the fish you're targeting to find out about their habits, where they hunt and any information you can find.

Once you have an idea for what you're looking for, there is no substitute for putting on your walking boots and going searching. Take a writing pad and pen and make notes of any good ground, so you can then return with the rod.

Google Earth is a great asset for searching the coastline. You are not going to see what you will first-hand, but it will give you a rough idea of the type of ground before you explore in detail.

Get into your local tackle shop and ask for any information. They won't give it to you on a plate, but will usually point you in the right direction.

It's a good idea to pick four or five different spots and concentrate on them. Don't fish a new place every time. I had four marks when I started and I fished them hard, often five times a week.

You should fish your marks in different weather conditions, tidal height, tide time, sea conditions, time of day and experiment with different lures and methods. You soon discover the factors that can play a role in whether a fish bites or not.

Record all the different factors in your notebook, even if you don't catch. When you do catch fish, look back through the book and you will start to see patterns. For example, at one place I noticed that I was only catching when I had an onshore wind of more than 15mph on a tide of 4.8 metres or higher. I could then plan to go there in these conditions and, in turn, saw my catch rate increase.

READING THE WATER

Watercraft is the most important part of fishing. This is something you pick up through plenty of hours spent fishing. It's essentially being able to read the water, which, in turn, can tell you where fish might be holding.

For example, disturbance on the surface could mean a submerged rock, which is a great place to fish over and around.

Fizzing, oxygenated water should get you results because it churns everything up, stirs baitfish around and the oxygen-rich water allows the bass to hunt fast for longer.

Seeing current should mean there could be fish holding in it waiting for the food to come their way. There are lots of little signs you pick up while fishing that will help determine where you cast your lure.



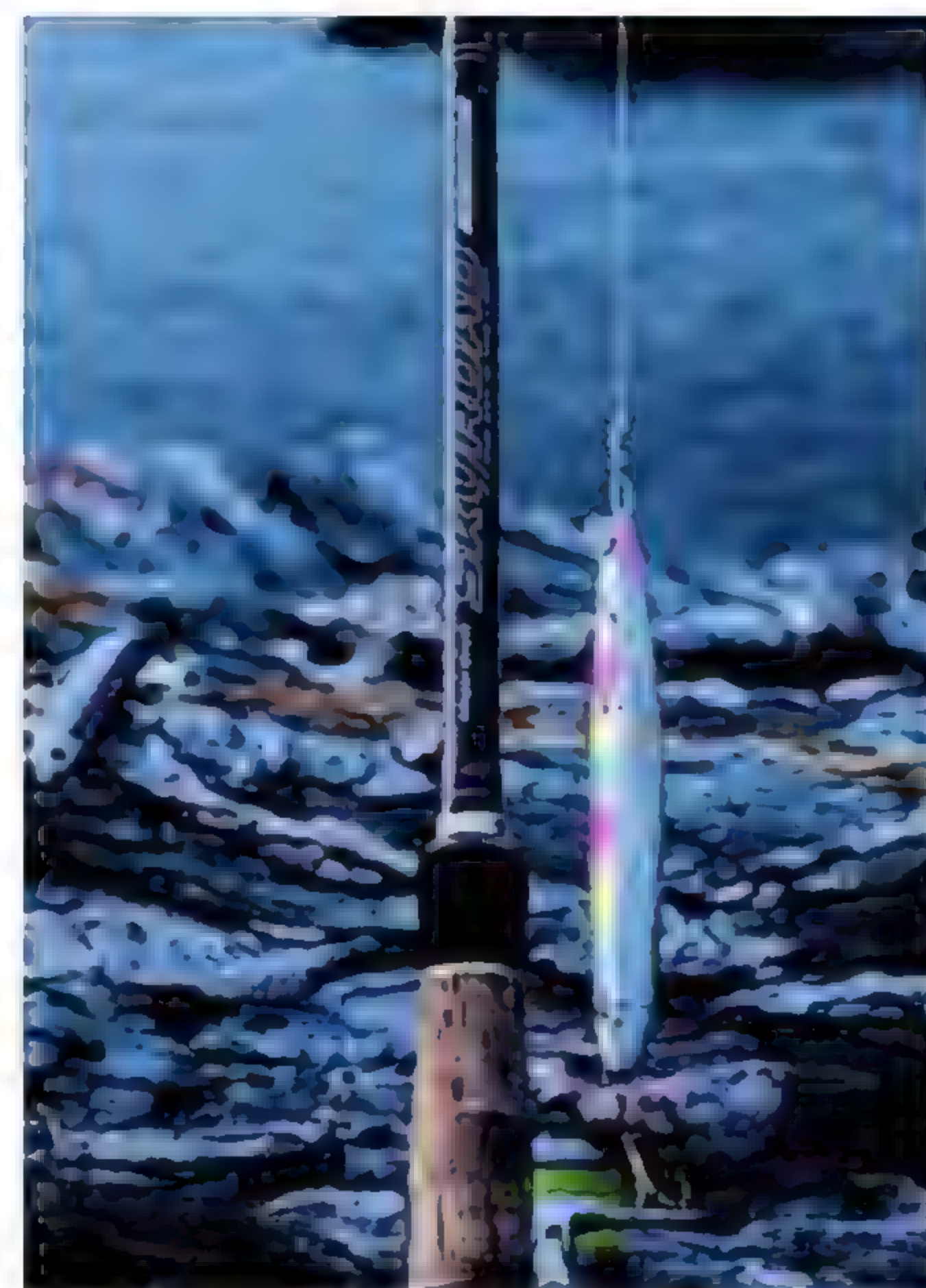
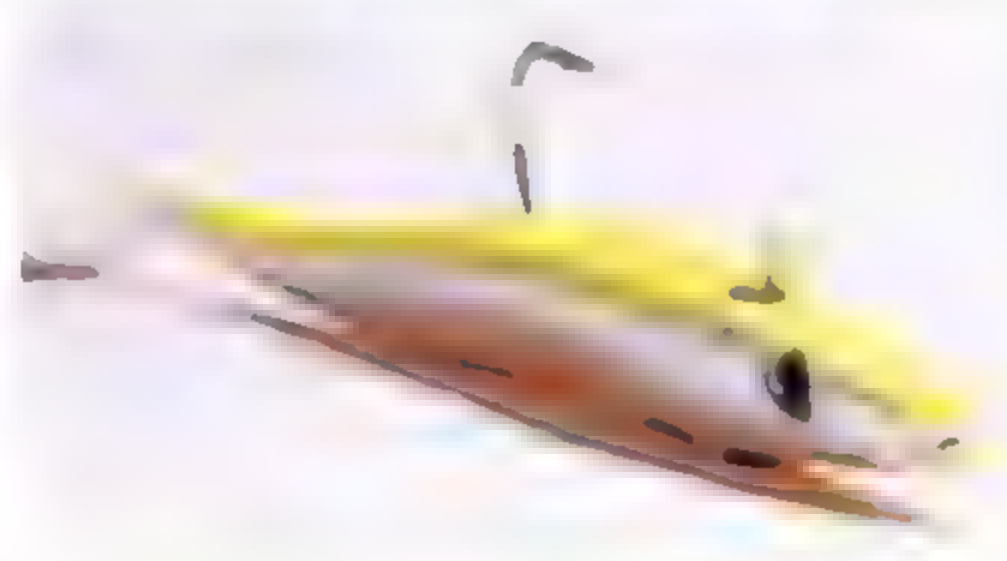
IT'S CATCHING

Your first year is going to be experimental and, at times, can be tough. You will spend a lot of time playing with your lures to find out how best to use them, what sort of retrieve is required and on what sort of ground.

You'll need to get used to your new rod and reel, and a lot of time will be spent tying and retying knots until you perfect them. Chances are you might lose a few lures, but if you commit to lure fishing the rewards can be great.

It may not affect everyone, but with certain people it will take over. It's as if you've had a lure-mad demon dormant until it is woken and just won't go away.

If I'm not lure fishing, I'm thinking, reading, writing or dreaming about it. I'm always learning.



■ **THE WRITER:** Blair Woodland is a self-employed stonemason living in the South Hams area of South Devon. He's been a bass lure angler since 2013.

SHORE SPECIES SPOTLIGHT Part 8

BASS

April signals the traditional start of the season for these silver bars, so here's how to boost your chances of success

BASS are one of our most adaptive fish species. They are found in estuaries, over rough ground, on surf beaches, and inside harbours and marinas. They can be caught on a wide variety of methods.

To get the best out of our bass fishing, we need to understand the changing seasons and how the bass adjust their feeding to coincide with seasonal peaks in the food chain.



Hold the rod
when bass fishing

WHEN & WHERE

Traditionally, the bass season begins in April, with fish moving into estuaries and on to rough ground beaches to capitalise on the first real flush of the peeling shore crabs.

By May the bass will be present in numbers, with June the best month of all just prior to the crab peel slowing down in July.

In estuaries, the bass run with the tide using the main channel like a motorway, then veer off to explore rougher weedier ground along the channel edges. They also enter side creeks, while over high tide on spring tides they will quarter shallow saltmarsh ground too, especially at night.

Smaller neap tides can fish well in estuaries, but mostly it will be the bigger tides, especially those just before the highest spring tide of the cycle, that fish best.

On rough ground beaches they have specific



feeding times and even routes they take. Start fishing at dead low water and work back up the beach. Look to put baits in shallow, rocky gullies. Also note small pockets in the rocks that hold water after the tide has gone out because these are hotspots when the new flood tide arrives.

Bass also quarter around bigger-than-average rocks, and at high tide can often be only a few feet out in only 2ft or 3ft of water. On rough ground, the bigger tides are the ones to fish when the ground has more depth and the water currents disturb more food.

On surf beaches bass are available for much of the year. That said, the best of the surf fishing is from late August until Christmas,

while in Ireland, January and February can be good too. Fish the bigger rising tides and look for parallel gutters that run along the beach, areas of boulders or stone outcrops or streams or rivers that cross the beach. Fish close to these, or concentrate at the ends of beaches where sand meets cliffs and stone.

Bass like some surf. Ideal winds are Force 2 to 4 onshore that put up an even flow of surf tables. Bass can be found in very rough surf, but tend to be further out, often at the very edge of average casting range. They can be taken by day in all these situations, but night-time tends to be more productive. By day, try to choose overcast conditions that reduce light levels.



Bass like areas of rough ground

TACKLE & RIGS

For average surf conditions, estuaries, and even rough ground fishing at close to medium range, you'll need to hold the rod for the best results and feel for the individual bites.

Therefore, an 11ft to 11ft 6in bass rod casting no more than 3oz is perfect. Combine this with a 6500-sized multiplier loaded with 20lb line straight through, or a 5000-sized fixed-spool loaded with 30lb braid. Mostly, you'll be using 2oz to 2½oz leads, so with consideration you can dispense with a leader, but always think safety if you have other anglers on your casting side.

The top rig for both estuaries and rough ground, where casting distance is often sub-50 yards, is a sliding paternoster. On to your mainline, slide on a size 6 swivel by one eye followed by a 5mm bead. Now tie on another size 6 swivel to the end of the line.

To the sliding swivel tie on 18 inches of 20lb line and connect the lead weight direct to this via a clip link. To the end swivel, tie on 12 inches of 20lb fluorocarbon and finish with a size 4/0 Viking pattern hook.

This set-up means any movement at the hook is instantly felt at the rod tip and into the hand.

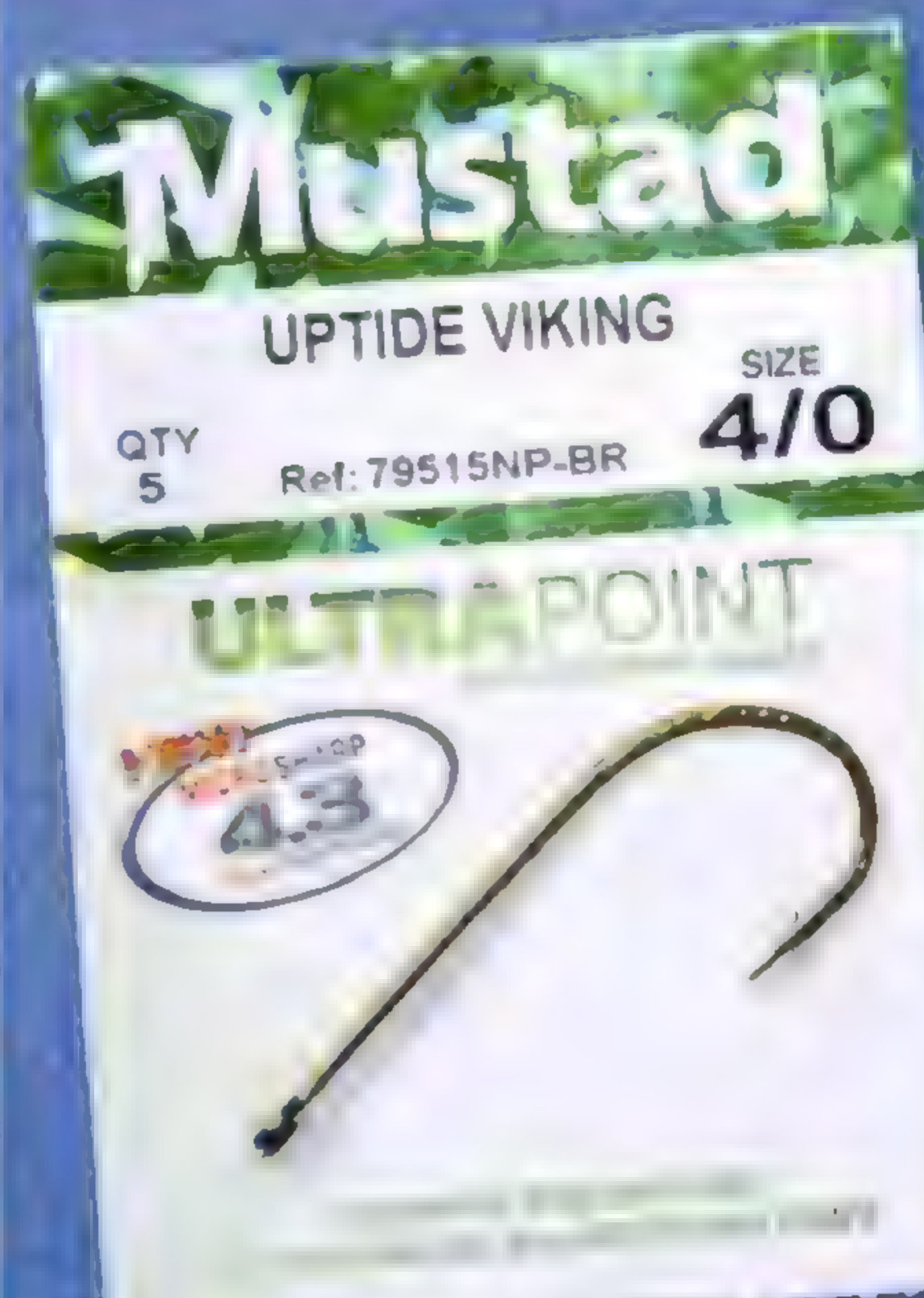
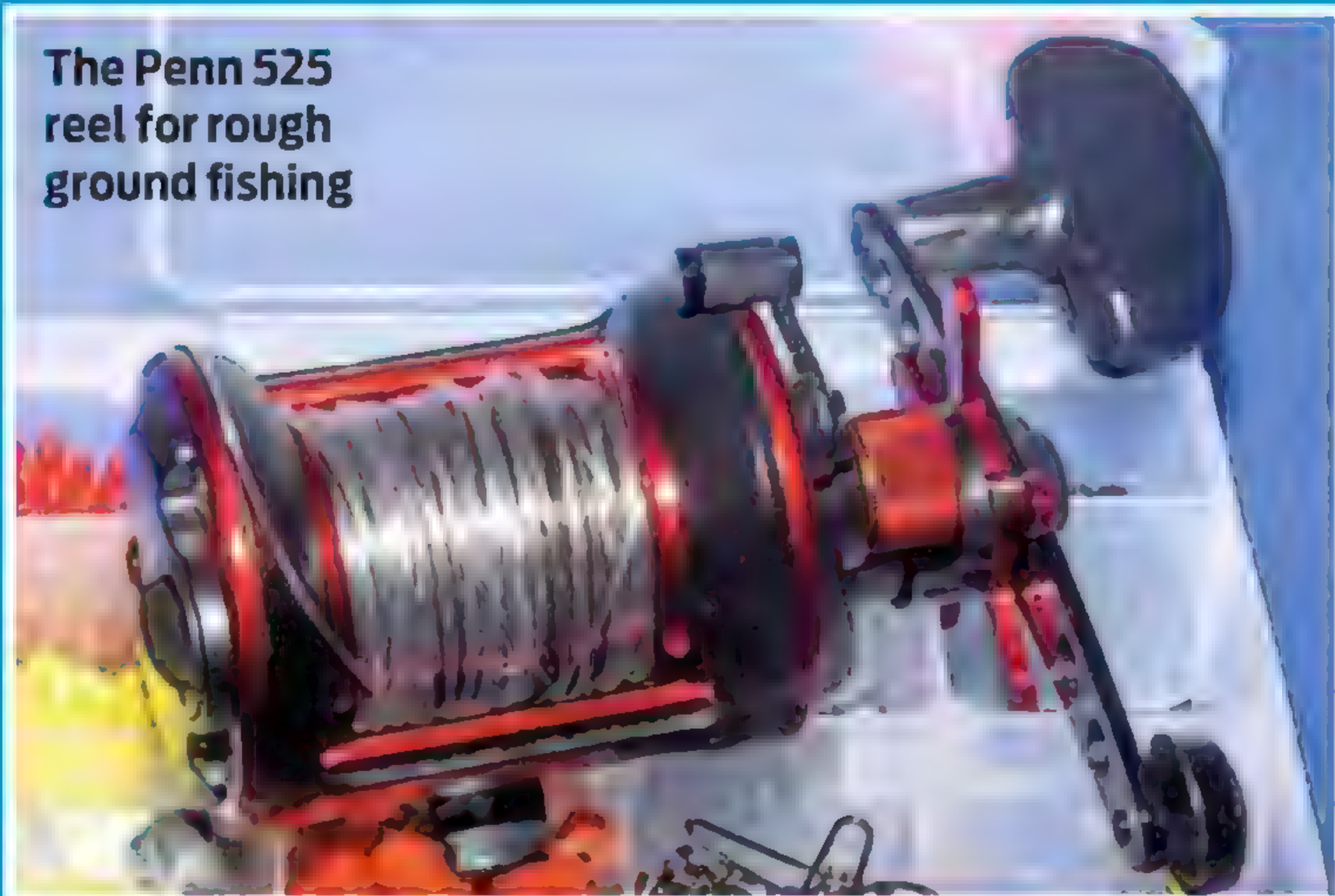
Bites can be soft and gentle, or plain savage. Strike when the rod tip gets pulled

over, or at anything you think is suspicious.

On surf beaches the fixed paternoster is best because it brings the fish hard up against the wired lead weight, mostly leading to self-hooking. Hooklengths should be kept to under 15 inches to minimise tangling in the surf.

In rougher seas, standard beachcasters with a casting range of 4oz to 6oz and either a multiplier, such as the Penn 525 or similar, loaded with 20/25lb line and a 60lb shockleader, or a long Euro-style rod, 7500 fixed spool, 30lb braid and a tapered leader gives the power for longer-range casting, along with the ability to bully fish a bit more through a heavy surf.

The Penn 525
reel for rough
ground fishing



Mustad
Viking
79515
hooks

SEA SCHOOL

GREAT SKILLS FOR CATCHING MORE FISH

BEST BAITS

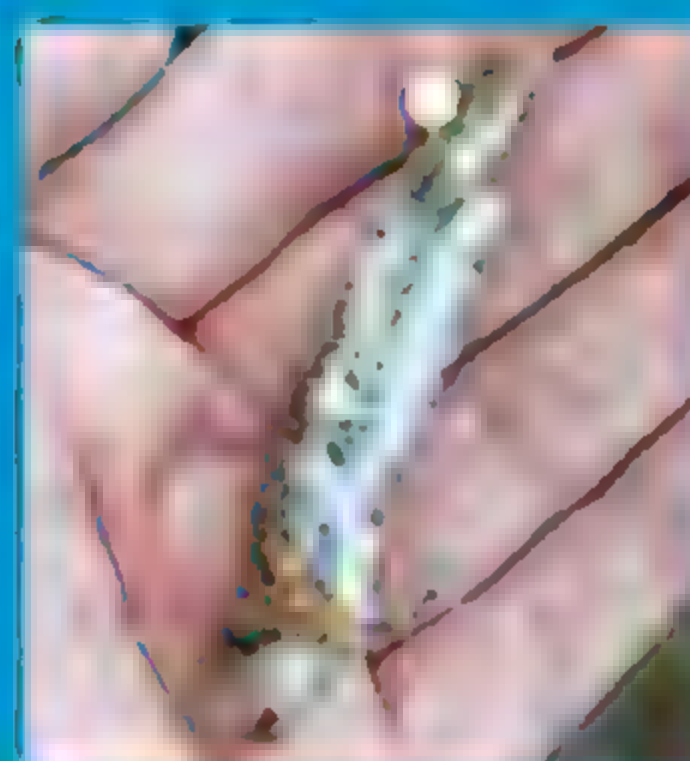
From April to June, in estuaries and over rough ground, the peeler crab is king. Kill the crab, peel off all the shell and cut big crabs into halves, then bind them to the hook with bait elastic. Baits should be sausage shaped, no longer than two inches and with a diameter of a 50p piece. Bigger than this and even big bass struggle to take the whole bait in one gulp and missed bites can occur.

In the surf, black and blow lugworms are excellent all year. Make a worm bait 3-5in in length, no more. If you use a two-hook Pennell rig and you're getting fish caught on the top hook only, then your baits are too big, and the bass are struggling to cram them in their mouth.

Especially in the late summer and autumn, a sandeel, whole or section of squid, a whole mackerel head or a mackerel tail work well. Other reliable baits are ragworms, and mussels and queen cockles after a storm. Combination worm and squid baits are popular too.



Peeler crab bait for rough ground bass



Above left: Lug is a productive bait for surf bass

Above: Use a whole squid for big bass

Left: Sandeel is a good all-rounder

Below: Mackerel heads work well



TOP TACTICS

In estuaries, try to anticipate where bass will pass through. They tend to come through in a relatively short period as the tide floods. You need to have areas, such as side creek junctions, weed beds and rougher weedier ground, where you can catch a fish or two, then move higher up the estuary to ambush the fish again as they continue travelling further up.

You can also catch bass as they filter back out of the estuary as the tide ebbs. The best period is often the first three hours after high water towards the estuary mouth.

On rough ground beaches it takes a practised eye, but look for obvious pathways the bass will travel through, such as gutters, inward-running shallow reefs, or a series of bigger rocks or pools. Keep lead weights as light as you can hold with, because these will snag far less often than heavier leads.

On surf beaches, experiment with casting distance. Bass can be 20 yards out, or close to 200 yards, meaning you may need to wade out. A good starting point is a 50-yard cast, then cast closer and further from there until you find the fish. If you don't get any bites, move a couple of hundred yards up the beach, which can make all the difference.

Best way to feel for bass bites is to hold the



The end result – a gleaming silver bar

rod across the body, with the rod tip almost at wave level and parallel to the surf or, if you're in deeper surf, upright at a forward angle. Keep the line tight and bites will be obvious.

Lift the rod sideways and upwards to strike, while taking a few steps back to really make sure the hook is home when casting to distance. ■

KNOW YOUR SPECIALIST RIGS

Chicken rig

How many fish will fall foul of this weighted set-up?

ACROSS between the Texas and Neko rig, the Chicken rig works most successfully when fishing manmade structures like docks, bridge pilings, seawalls and also natural rock areas and sand drop-offs.

This rig was probably devised by lure ace Gary Yamamoto, who first used it with a Kut Tail jellyworm, which is rigged backwards (wacky rig style, Sea Angler issue 580) with an added nail weight.

Why Chicken rig? It stands for Backwards, wacky, weighted, Kut Tail or BWWK, which, some say, sounds a bit like a chicken.

The lure is cast out and worked in with either a lift and drop or a twitch. Its erratic fall, large profile and vibrations trigger strikes.

HOW TO MAKE IT

1 – You need a 4in Z-Man Finesse WormZ lure, and a VMC Predator size 1 hook tied to a 0.18mm to 0.30mm fluoro leader.

2 – Insert the hook point about 1½in from the tail of the lure.

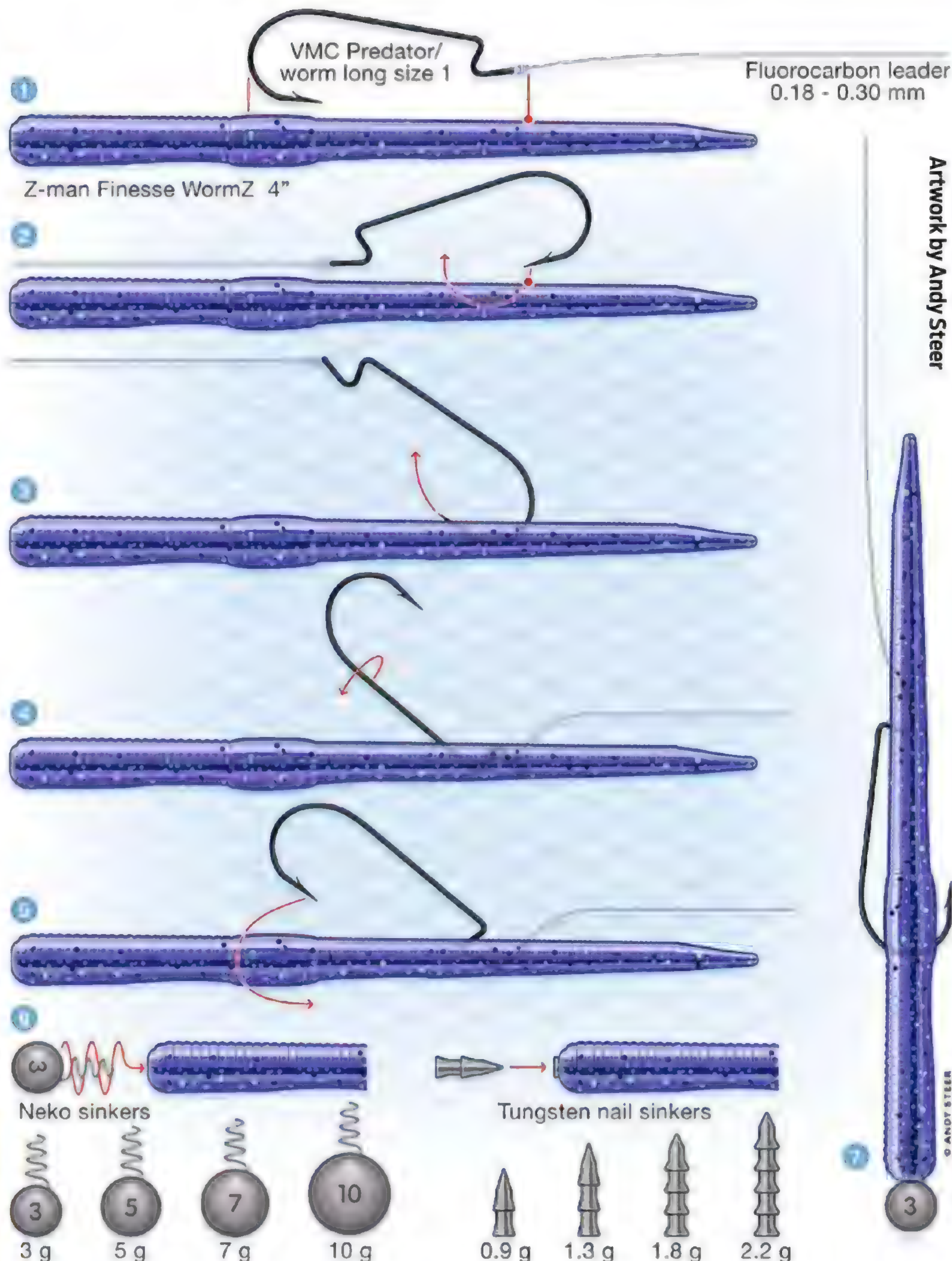
3 – Bring the point out of the lure about 2in from the tail.

4 – Twist hook so point faces down and back to tail end.

5 – Insert hook in front of bulge in lure and out underneath.

6 – Insert a Neko or nail sinker into the head end of lure.

7 – The lure rigged and ready for fishing.



Artwork by Andy Steer

The printed edition of 'Light Rock Fishing - Hard Rock Fishing Knots & Rigs' is now available at <http://amzn.eu/d/ctqSCI9>

With the FREE Kindle reader app, you can read this book on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Free Kindle Reader app: www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=200783640



ONLINE LINK TO THE VIDEO:
youtu.be/7JiMRf68PrQ



Q&A

SHORE FISHING

ASK THE EXPERTS

WHEN SENDING YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS



PAUL FENECH

Sea Angler's features and tackle editor Paul is here to solve your shore angling problems.



DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.



MARK CRAME

Suffolk-based Mark gets a thrill from fishing afloat on a kayak. Send him your kayaking queries.



HENRY GILBEY

Angler and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, will answer questions on lure angling.



DAN SISSONS

The Portsmouth angler will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK A QUESTION

■ WRITE TO:
Q&A, Sea Angler,
Media House,
Lynchwood
Business Park,
Peterborough
PE2 6EA
Email: SeaAngler
@bauermedia.
co.uk
Online: www.
facebook.com/
seaanglermag

Q: I'm thinking of booking a shore trip to Norway and transporting my beach rods in a plastic drainpipe. Would this be acceptable on an airline?

GARRY TANNER, BY EMAIL

PF says: Yes, as long as it's secured and strong enough to withstand some less desirable handling from baggage handlers on the ground. Rather than spend time trying to manufacture your own, it's definitely worthwhile purchasing a manufactured rod tube for protecting those expensive beachcasters.



Q: I'm a carp angler who has recently taken up sea fishing. I can cast more than 100 yards with my carp rods, but are they up to the job of shore fishing?

ANDY WILBY, RUSHDEN, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

PF says: Carp rods can be used for many areas in shore angling such as lure or float-fishing for mackerel, wrasse and garfish, or light estuary fishing for species such as flounders.

However, open beach fishing brings a whole new set of problems to deal with, such as waves and strong tides.

I would suggest purchasing a decent beachcaster and leaving the carp rods for your stillwater fishing.



In association with



Q: Are mussels from the supermarket any good to use as bait?

ADE HOWARTH, PORTSMOUTH, HANTS

PF says: Be careful you aren't buying the

freshwater variety from a supermarket.

It will be wiser to visit a fresh fishmonger or travel to your local quayside market.

It could even be more beneficial if you find some rocks at low tide where you could possibly collect your own, plus it would cost you nothing.



Q: A mate of mine told me it's better to thread a lugworm on to a hook tail first. Is he right?

MIKE CARTER, GILLINGHAM, KENT

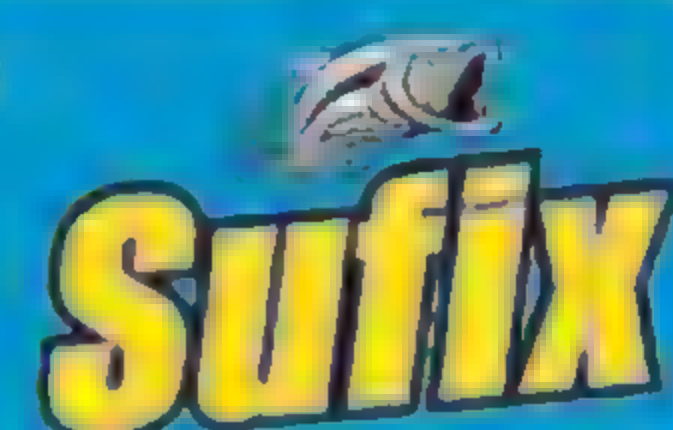
PF says: I've always put my lug on the hook tail first, simply because the tail is full of sand and therefore useless, so I want it nowhere near the point.

Lug also have bristles that point backwards from the head...does it help to position them so they go down the mouth of fish easier? There is no right or wrong way to mount a lug bait – just make sure that the hook point is visible.



WIN SUFIX AND RAPALA PRIZES WORTH £170

Each issue we award a prize for a shore, boat/kayak and lure/LRF question.



■ The shore winner receives two spools of Sufix Tritanium Neon Orange 0.35mm mainline, two spools of 80lb Sufix Zippy shockleader and two spools of Sufix Shock Max 0.18mm-0.50mm tapered shockleader worth £52.



■ The boat/kayak winner receives a 300m spool of Sufix 50lb X8 Stealth Green braid and a 250m spool of Sufix 50lb Matrix Pro braid worth £53.

■ The lure/LRF winner receives five of the new Rapala MaxRap lures worth £65



Rapala

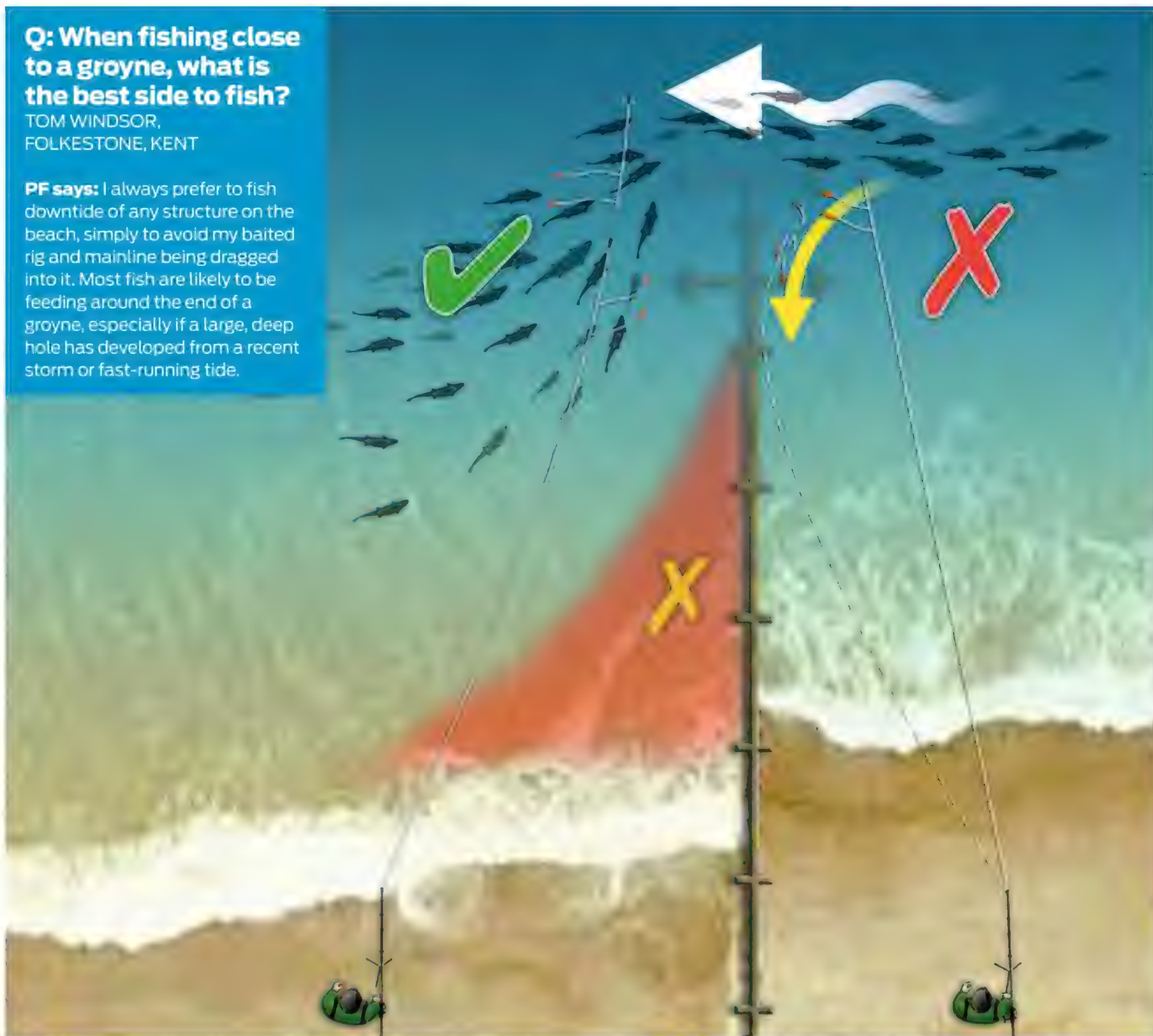
To view the full range of Sufix and Rapala products, visit: www.sufixfishing.fishing and www.rapala.co.uk

T&Cs: Three winning questions will be chosen by the editor. Prizes cannot be exchanged and no correspondence is permitted. The sponsor reserves the right to send alternative prizes.

Q: When fishing close to a groyne, what is the best side to fish?

TOM WINDSOR,
FOLKESTONE, KENT

PF says: I always prefer to fish downtide of any structure on the beach, simply to avoid my baited rig and mainline being dragged into it. Most fish are likely to be feeding around the end of a groyne, especially if a large, deep hole has developed from a recent storm or fast-running tide.



Q: I have noticed some anglers using coloured lead weights. Does this actually make a difference, and what do I paint my sinkers with please?

DAVE GRAY, SOUTHAMPTON,
HAMPSHIRE

PF says: I've heard of anglers using car spray paint to colour their lead weights. This will soon wear off, so you will need to keep re-spraying them.

There are also some powdered paints in many colours too. However, whether coloured sinkers bring more fish to the beach, I'm not so sure.



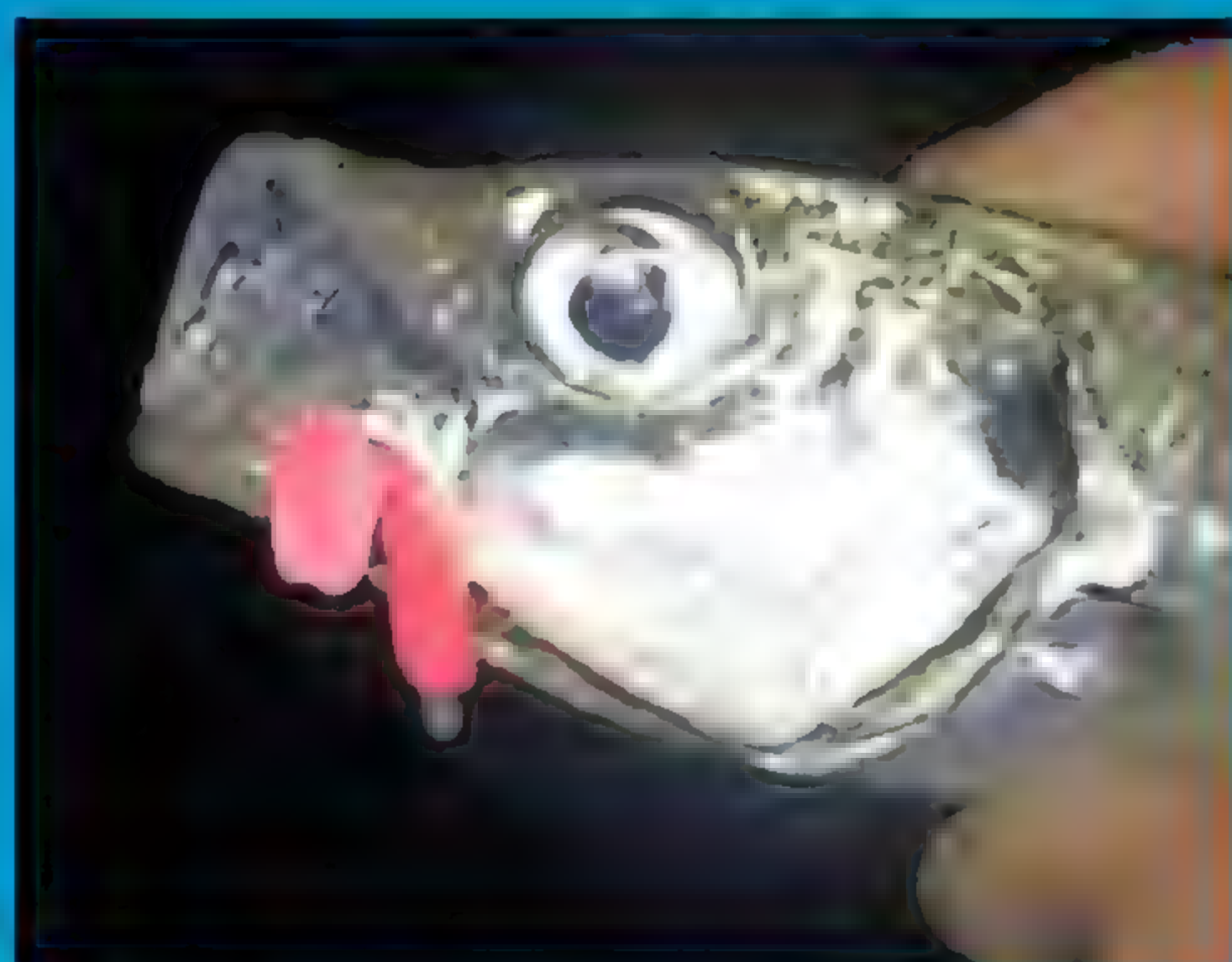
Q&A

LRF

Q: I have always struggled with pink lures even though there seems to be so many available in that colour. Is there a good time to use them?

DEAN MANNING, ALTRINCHAM,
GTR MANCHESTER

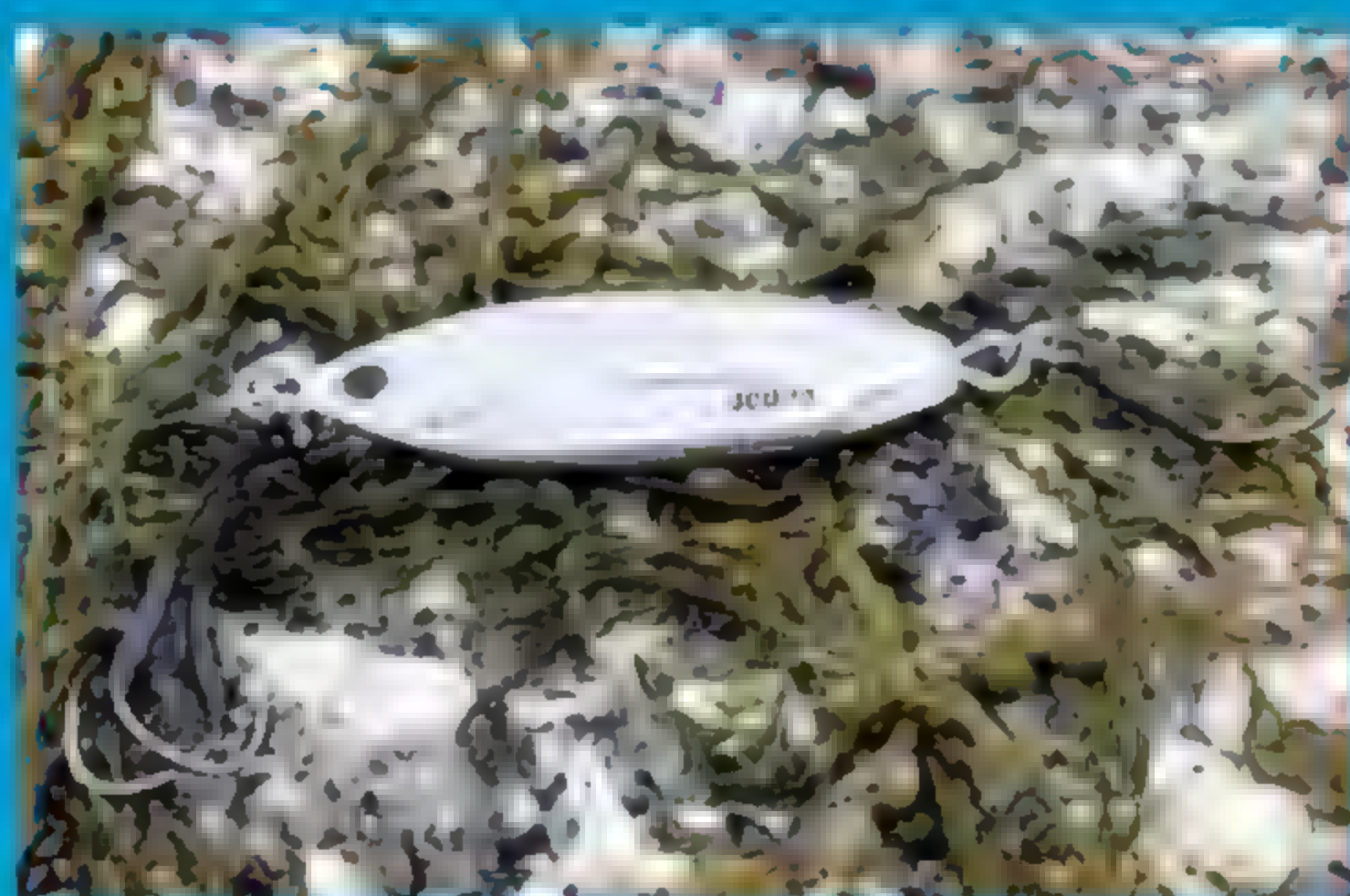
DS says: For paddletails, I will use pink at night. Don't ask me why they work, but they do. If it's a creature bait-type lure, then I will use pink in low light and work it very slowly.



Q: Which way around should I rig metal jigs?

TONY PATTINSON, MORPETH,
NORTHUMBERLAND

DS says: If the metal has an eye, then I prefer to attach it there using a lure clip. Some metal lures will come with assist hooks already rigged, so the top end will often have two assists, which is the end that you connect to your leader.



Q: I've been storing my flavoured lures in plastic containers, but they still dry out. Are the purpose-made containers worth the money?

DAVID MORGAN, ABERYSTWYTH, CEREDIGION

DS says: Definitely. The bigger the container the sooner the liquid will evaporate.

In a busy session, the plastic tub will be open often, which then allows the moisture to dry out.

I use small containers and keep different brands separate. The screw lid type is also more likely to stop the liquid leaking into your bag or box.



Q: Can you tell me the difference between a shanny and a blenny?

BEN TAYLOR, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX

DS says: None at all. There are many variations on fish names around the country,

and the mini species are no different. Blenny is a general name that covers all blennies, whereas shanny covers just one of the many variations. Tompot and black-faced are two other blennies, but the one you are most likely to encounter is the humble shanny that are often laying on rocks in very shallow water and will attack a lure very freely.

Q&A

LURE ANGLING

Q: How should I set my drag for wrasse fishing?

NICK THORNTON, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

HG says: Tight, and I mean properly tight. Whenever I hear that a wrasse took yards of line, my first thought is why? Why give a fish that is so good at getting into hard cover a better chance of doing so? When fishing with 20lb braid and a 20lb leader for wrasse, I will tighten my reel drag as far as it will go because I don't want any line to be able to come off my spool.



Q: Are three treble hooks necessary on a hard lure?

ALAN TAYLOR, MORECAMBE, LANCs

HG says: Yes and no. I always remove the middle treble hook on my diving hard lures of under, say, 150mm long. Considering that I don't tend to fish with sub-surface lures any longer than this that means I'm fishing with two sets of (barbless) treble hooks and hooking up bass just fine.

I don't like three sets of treble hooks flying around, and I think it's overkill – both for the fish and also for my hands.



Q: Do I have to buy breathable chest waders for lure fishing?

BARRY LANE, MAIDSTONE, KENT

HG says: It is not compulsory, but on the other hand I don't know how I would do the bulk of my bass fishing without them. Increasingly, I find myself turning to the

heavier and non-breathable chest waders, such as from Vass, for my surf fishing, but for nearly all my other bass lure fishing I am in breathable, lightweight chesties and, increasingly, waist waders.

You can try fishing without them, but I have a feeling that you will soon find your way into a pair.

Our waters are not warm, and staying dry is so much more comfortable.



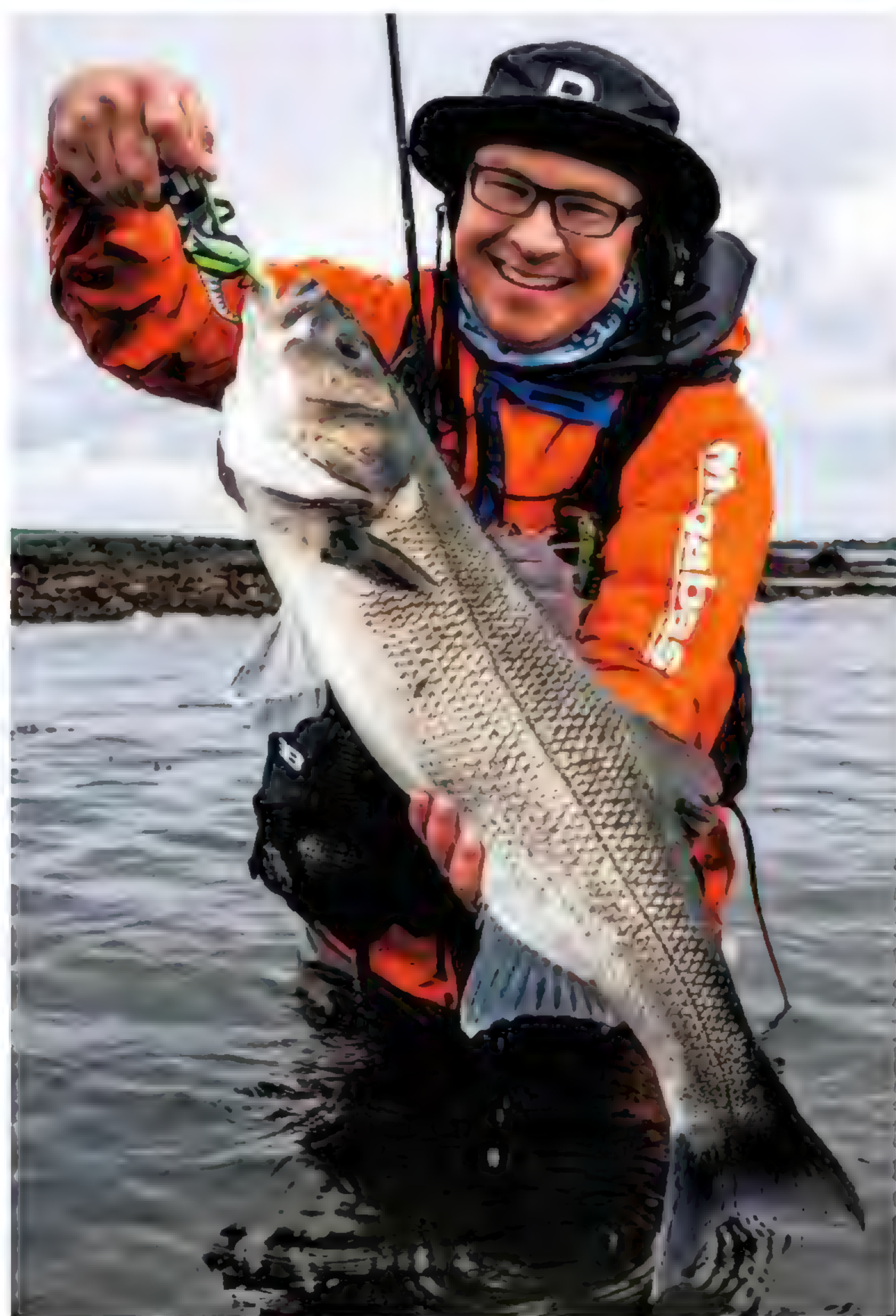
Q: Will I catch much bigger bass if I fish with much bigger lures?

JACK IRVINE, DOWNHAM MARKET, NORFOLK

HG says: I don't believe so. You can catch small bass on big lures, for starters.

It's amazing how small some bass are compared to the lures they hit, but by no means am I saying don't use much bigger lures.

If I think back to all the double-figure bass I have seen caught from the shore on lures – and it has been a few – I can't think of one which came on what I would call a big lure. It's worth trying different things, though, so never ignore that part of fishing.



Q: Can I fish with hard and soft lures for bass with the same rod?

LUKE PRIOR, BILLINGSHURST, WEST SUSSEX

HG says: Yes, although I admit that at times the choice of rod you need for bass fishing can get very confusing. One company says its lure rod is perfect for surface lures, while the next claims its rod is ideal for soft plastics, and so on.

We all prefer different rods, so I'd take manufacturers' claims with a pinch of salt because lure fishing is so subjective and personal in terms of what we like. A 10-30g modern lure rod will cope just fine with hard and soft lures.



Q: I want to buy a few soft plastics and have a go for wrasse. Do you have one pattern of lure you would not be without and would feel less confident about catching, were you to leave it at home?

SAMUEL WOOD, STOKE-ON-TRENT

HG says: It would have to be the virtually indestructible 4in Z-Man Punch Crawz in the California Craw colour. They are absolutely lethal for wrasse, and I am convinced that their natural buoyancy and how they sit up off the bottom a bit helps with their appeal.

Don't mix Z-Man soft lures with any other soft plastics, otherwise they all melt together. Keep them in their original packets and you will be fine.

Q: How much braid do I need on my spinning reel, please?

PETER GRIFFITHS, LLANELLI, CARMS

HG says: I like the fact that many of the braids we might use come on roughly 150yd/metre spools, and I reckon this is plenty for our bass fishing.

Some lures might cast a long way, but we're catching fish that don't run very far. I have started buying some of those 300yd spools for my surf fishing, but that's mainly because some metal lures can go a long way, and then with a big side wind you've got heaps more braid pouring off your reel.

I also like the fact that reversing 300yd of braid on a spinning reel gets me to a lot of unused mainline.



Q&A

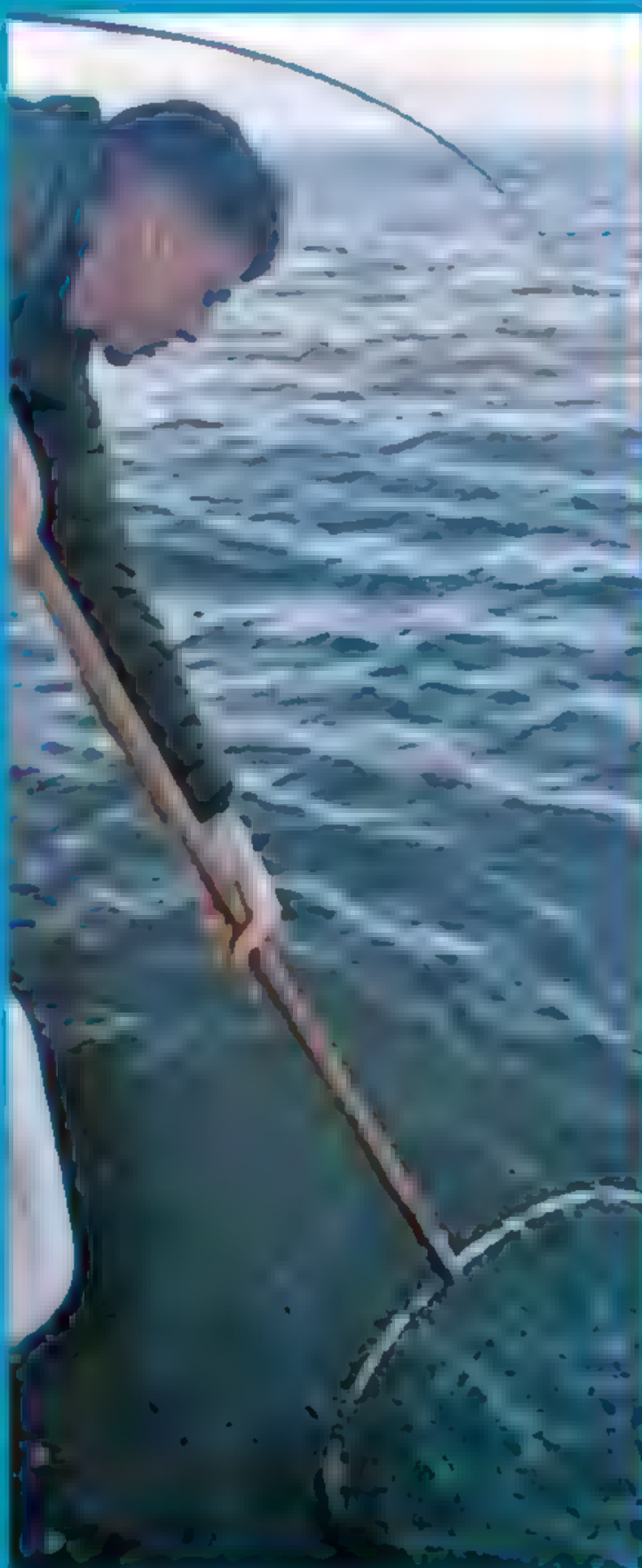
BOAT ANGLING

Q: I struggle to net fish in a strong tide because the net acts like a drogue. Is there a technique to it?

SIMON SHEPPARD, SOUTHBEND, ESSEX

DL says:

Handling a landing net in a strong flow of tide is at best extremely difficult, and at times impossible. Position the net immediately behind the fish and hold it still, then tell the angler to slowly allow the tide to reverse the fish into the net, at which point you can scoop it up.



Q: How important are eyes on lures?

PETER GRAVES, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK

DL says: When fishing in clear water I would say that prominent eyes are an important, if not essential, feature on any lure. Often the body of a small baitfish is all but translucent, but the eyes are generally distinct black orbs.



Q: Can I use my shore rigs when fishing afloat?

ADAM THOMPSON, BOSTON, Lincs

DL says: Yes, you can. Some anglers prefer a fixed paternoster to the standard running

leger, for example, while two or three-hook rigs are ideal for presenting different baits.

See the shore rigs in our free booklet in this issue. One of the great joys of boat angling is having a hunch that something different might work, trying it, and catching a fish.



Q: Does line colour matter when boat fishing?

GEORGE GIBSON, GATESHEAD, TYNE & WEAR

DL says: As long as I have been fishing, I have heard anglers debate this issue. In most cases I would say no, the colour of line you use does not matter. However, it may make a difference on some days when fishing shallow clear water.

In such circumstances, I prefer to use clear or natural coloured line.

Q: I spotted some really cheap bags of frozen mackerel in a pet food suppliers. Are these any good for bait?

TREVOR WILLIAMS, CARDIFF, SOUTH WALES

DL says: I very much doubt that the frozen fish you describe are of a comparable quality to those intended for angling, which typically have been blast frozen.

However, for many species, like bull huss, dogfish, conger eels and rays, for example, I am sure they will make an effective bait.



Q: This summer I intend to try fly-fishing for bass, pollack and other species from my own boat. Which flies do you recommend?

DALE FRANKLIN, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET

DL says: There are a huge amount of excellent saltwater fly patterns, almost all of which will catch something.

I suggest you start off with a selection of basic baitfish patterns, such as Deceivers and Clouser Minnows, as shown, then gradually add to your collection.



Q: Are breakout lead weights or those with fixed wires better when uptiding?

LEWIS METCALFE, RIPON, NORTH YORKS

DL says: Breakout weights work well in relatively shallow water with a light to modest run of tide, especially when targeting fast-running species such as bass, tope or smoothounds.

Faced with deeper water and a strong tide, fixed leads are often more effective for holding bottom.



Q: I fish in the Bristol Channel where we catch a lot of small turbot. I caught what looked like a turbot, but it was more oval in shape. Was it a brill?

PETER HAWKINS, CIRENCESTER, GLOS

DL says: Without seeing an image of your fish, it's hard to be certain, but it very much sounds like you caught a brill, which are oval in profile. I have fished the Bristol Channel for many years and caught a lot of turbot, but during this time I have seen only three or few brill landed.

Q: Garfish are usually easier to catch than fresh mackerel when on summer shark and tope trips, especially when drifting with chum bags over the side. Are garfish any good for bait?

JOHN PHILLIPS, DEVISES, WILTS

DL says: Garfish are an excellent bait. In most cases as good as, or even more effective than mackerel, especially for blue sharks. On some days, blues can be surprisingly fussy regarding which baits they will eat.



Q: Is it possible or necessary to fit a bow roller to a small inflatable boat (SIB)?

ANDREW PRENTICE, CROWBOROUGH, EAST SUSSEX

DL says: If you intend fishing at anchor then a bow roller is certainly worth having because it minimises wear and tear on the sponsons caused by the contact with an anchor rope.

A roller also ensures the boat remains facing head into the tide, which is both convenient when fishing, and an important safety consideration when anchoring in strong tides.

Several bow rollers are designed for SIBs, and a web search will show you exactly what is available.



Q&A

KAYAK

Q: What sort of storage box should I use for my tackle on a kayak?

LEE EDWARDS, NEWPORT, SOUTH WALES

MC says: Why do you need extra clutter. Avoid an open crate because it is an easy way to lose everything if you capsize. They also require you to reach around behind you to get anything, which produces stability issues. You can put your bait in a small cool box or bag and secure to the kayak with bungee cords (pictured right).

I have sufficient tackle stowed and easily accessible in my PFD, with weights kept in my bait bag or a small tub. My anchor and



reel are stowed in the footwells, and my trolley in the front hatch.

If you want to take more kit, then a deckbag can be fitted.

Q: What sort of anchor should I use when fishing with bait?

GRANT MILLER, PLYMOUTH, DEVON

MC says: T, to some degree, this depends on the ground you are fishing.

When I started out it was with small folding grapnel anchors, which I gradually increased in size to 2.5kg (and chain). They were never really that great on the sand and mud of my area of Suffolk, but they were acceptable.

Then I tried a 1kg Bruce anchor, without chain, and never looked back. It is ideal on sand, but struggles on clay. A folding grapnel, fitted with a breakout cable tie to reverse it, is perhaps better on rough ground. It's also good on a wreck, but there's still a large risk of it remaining there afterwards.

Some of my friends have made use of a house brick when there's not too much current. I scale down to 0.75kg grapnels so they are less likely to jam



Q: Are there minimum fitness levels required to go kayak fishing?

DARREN BURTON, METHWOLD, NORFOLK

MC says: A reasonable level of fitness is required. The paddling is relatively easy once your basic technique is sorted and you plan around the currents and wind. Don't paddle

against the tide and wind if you can help it.

The mark I fish most often can be accessed from two places, a mile either side, and I chose the most suitable site to expend the minimum of energy, paddling out across the tidal flow while drifting along laterally rather than paddling against the elements.

That said, the fitter you are the better because sometimes you do need to push a bit harder.

Q: I snapped a rod in a rod holder when my kayak capsized. Should I avoid using rod holders?

PETER WHEATLEY, BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND

MC says: There is always this risk if using the rod holders when launching and landing. I doubt there are many kayak anglers who haven't got a broken rod, so you aren't alone, but be aware that this can also damage the hull where the rod holder is fitted.

I would suggest you store the rods broken down in the hull, laying flat and strapped along the hull, with the tips held down or in protectors, or laying flat under your legs. Do not have them tensioned against the line

Q: I've seen various options for moving kayaks. Which type is best?

SEB MORRIS, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET

MC says: I've got a petrol engine in my sports car and a diesel in my estate. Both are better. I have two different styles of paddle, both are better – it's down to choice, style and use.

I love paddling. It feels good physically, I feel connected and it keeps me fit. When I fit a sail I really enjoy that and can go further, faster for less effort. A motor is great if you have sufficient battery for your intentions (and you don't mind carrying the weight of motor and battery



around). Pedal drives, which also keep you fit, are very efficient for propulsion, while also allowing you to use your hands while moving. They are without doubt the best for holding position against current while lure fishing, for example.



Pike tricks for bass

Some coarse fishing techniques are relevant to your saltwater success

YOU'LL RECALL ADVICE ALONG THE LINES OF "YOUR OLD PIKE rod will do" or "Use a stout spinning rod, one you'd use for pike". Sometimes they were right, and you could visit the coast or estuary and, at certain marks, make do for tackling bass.

Less has been suggested about the potential crossover between pike techniques and methods for bass. I've been experimenting, fully aware that they are two very different predators, and that we may have to be cautious in making assumptions. However, there is sufficient commonality between them to consider the viability of trying things in saltwater. I fish primarily rocky ground and quiet estuaries, so my advice applies to these situations.

DEADBAITS

In calmer water, estuaries and gullies, deadbaits can be employed with subtle rod movements to incite bass to hit wounded prey. A slow sink-and-draw retrieve typifies this wobbled deadbait method.

These baits have enough weight to be cast short alongside rocks and other structures. To prolong the use of the partially thawed deadbait, lip hook it and slip a 5mm square of red elastic band over the single hook well past the barb. The take can be gentle rather than savage.

By just unclipping the lead weight, you can quickly change from a legered rig and deploy a wobbled one, though you may prefer to freeline...particularly useful if you come across a hunted shoal of prey fish and you're not getting takes on static baits.

FLOAT-FISHING

Vaned floats transfer readily to bass fishing, especially when you want to present an off-bottom bait over snaggy ground. You can, by using the wind and rod tip held high, send the float searching hard-to-reach areas as well as at distance.

By cutting a slot in a pencil float, you can glue a vane into it. Thin fruit box wood or balsa, some painted red, some black, in various sizes from 7cm square upwards for different lights, works well. To aid line control and striking, you can rub on line flotant with a cloth.

FISH OIL

In calm conditions, to increase scent trails when piking we used to pour pilchard oil down the throat of bottom-fished deadbaits. It may have some potential for close-in bass fishing.

Curiosity used to catch some wary pike. Coloured sprats, mackerel and smelts, well-daubed with cheap red food dye, used to be effective. The safe dye will stay on a good half hour before needing a respray. For maximising scent in ground relatively crab-free or in coloured water, you can swap your paternoster lead weight for a weighted swimfeeder crammed with mashed fish and pilchard oil.

I'm sure there are numerous other coarse fishing techniques adaptable for bass fishing.

Keep up to date with BASS at www.ukbass.com or on Facebook or Twitter. ■



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Through-wire Construction • Magnum Durability •
Xtreme Casting Distance • X-Rap Finishes • Saltwater
Prey Patterns • 3D Holographic Eyes • Ti-coated VMC
Heavy-duty Hooks

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AVAILABLE
NOW!

FIRST LOOK

Paul Fenech samples the latest gear to hit the tackle shops



PENN FIERCE III FIXED-SPOOL REEL RRP: £109.99-£119.99

Penn has recently launched the third generation of Fierce fixed-spool reels, including a Live Liner version. Both reels feature full metal bodies and sideplates as well as the accomplished HT-100 carbon fibre drag system.

All reels are equipped with five shielded

stainless-steel bearings to ensure an incredibly smooth crank, as well as heavy-duty bale-arms.

Aluminium spools mean they are ideal for using with braid, while spool rings aid you when loading with mainline.

The Live Liner version is perfect for

anglers fishing into deep water when targeting large species such as cod, coalfish and halibut.

■ For more information or to locate your nearest Penn stockist, visit: www.penn-fishing.co.uk



The spool spindle



The spool has line capacity rings



The Live Liner switch



FEATURES

- Precise gear alignment under heavy loads
- Techno balanced rotor
- Shielded stainless-steel bearings
- Instant anti-reverse
- HT-100 carbon fibre drag washers
- Aluminium spool
- Line capacity rings



SUFIX ADVANCE FLUOROCARBON

RRP: £15.99-£22.99

This award-winning fluorocarbon offers unrivalled strength and abrasion resistance, as well as increased sensitivity and supreme handling on the reel and through rod guides. It is developed using a new technology that has binded the extruded materials together better than ever before, in a process called Gel Phase Technology (GPT).

Available in 8lb (3.5kg/0.205mm), 10lb, 11lb, 12lb, 14lb, 17lb and 20lb (9.2kg/0.405mm), it is said to be virtually invisible in water, sinks four times faster than traditional nylon lines, has low stretch and is virtually memory free.

■ For more info, visit: www.rapala.co.uk/sufix



“These lures have a level of strength to absorb the most vicious strikes”



RAPALA MAGNUM XPLODE POPPERS

RRP: £22.99-£25.45

These poppers combine a heavy through-wire construction with a thick-walled ABS body, giving them a level of strength to absorb the most vicious strikes. A low positioned tow point pulls the popper downwards, keeping the lure stable in all weather conditions; while its deep-cupped face generates a surface explosion with each sweep of your rod. The long-casting, rear-weighted lure rests tail down, perfectly positioning the 5/0 VMC 75 Series 6X Tropic Spark Point hooks, which are connected to 250lb split rings.



■ For more info or to locate your nearest stockist, visit: www.rapala.co.uk

DAIWA SALTIST SURF ROD RRP: £230

The new Daiwa Saltist Surf 14ft 2in, two-piece shore rod packs a real punch, having an incredible casting action combined with power. Harnessing the best performance from High Volume Fibre ensures this outfit not only has power, but the torque-busting resistance of X45 Technology ensures you get maximum return from effort.

■ To locate your nearest Daiwa stockist, visit: www.daiwasports.co.uk

FEATURES

- Length 14ft 2in
- Two-piece rod
- 100-200g rating
- Adjustable Fuji reel seat
- Fuji 'O' guides
- High Volume Fibre (HVF)
- X45 Technology
- V-Joint

“This rod packs a real punch having an incredible casting action”

SNUGPAK TAC3 JACKET RRP: £134.95

Made in the UK, this is a lightweight and insulated jacket featuring a rollaway thermal hood. Other features include a Swiss-made insulation and lined with a luxurious brushed thermal suede lining for extra comfort. It's also wind-resistant, while the outer fabric has been treated to be water repellent. Available in black, camo and olive and sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL.

■ For more info or to locate a stockist, visit: www.snugpak.com

BIOLITE HEADTORCH

RRP: £44.99

One of the lightest headtorches around weighing only 50g. Offers a cool 200 lumens of light, with white plus dim, red plus dim and red and white strobes. The main unit has a tilt mechanism and you can expect 40 hours of light on a low setting. Easily recharged with the USB cable that's included.

■ For more info, visit: www.bioliteenergy.com



Three-piece sweet

Two three-piece rods from Akios that offer shore anglers performance, power, delicacy and reliability...

AKIOS ENDURANCE PRO RS2 TWIN TIP & AIRTORQUE 435

RRP: £249.99 & £369.99

I'VE LOST COUNT HOW MANY THREE-PIECE Continental-style rods I've tested over the years, with each one pretty much performing like the next one...to me anyway. With retail prices ranging from a mere 70 quid and stretching upwards to a jaw-dropping £800 and beyond, it's often difficult to work out which particular three-piece outfit is ultimately 'the

one' to purchase...after all, price doesn't always reflect the best option.

As three-piece shore rods go, though, the range available from Akios must certainly rank highly among the best on the market. For starters, you can expect the very best materials and components to be used in each rod's construction. In addition, the power as well as a delicate performance is definitely guaranteed too.

I recently got my hands on a couple of the more popular three-piece rods to be released by Akios, and readily admit that on the beach, I was incredibly impressed with the pair. ▶

EXCLUSIVE
**LIVE
TEST**





MORE POWER

The Akios Airtorque 435 offers more power to those shore anglers who demand it, for punching larger baits further from the beach. Designed specifically to be used with a fixed-spool reel, it really is an outfit that does it with ease. Even simple overhead flicks can see a baited rig flying away high and long. But, by putting a little more zest and effort into a cast, this is where this rod really does out-perform many others in its class.

I'm often dubious of labelled casting ratings emblazoned on a rod, that can leave me scratching my head in utter bemusement. The Airtorque indicates 100-220g weights for casting – that is a serious rating for even the most powerful of beach rods, although it does specifically state an optimum rating of 170g.

I attached a 200g lead weight to a three-hook rig loaded with worm and fish baits, and must admit I didn't find it comfortable at all. However, when I switched to a 175g sinker, the performance was absolutely superb.

Using overhead thumps, the rod loads smoothly, and when you actually arrive at the point of release it all goes off without a hitch. At no time did I experience sloppiness within the blank, nor was there any folding evident. What did please me was the fact that the loading process to the actual hit is incredibly easy to handle. Aim your cast high and the rod simply does the rest with ease.

Much of the power comes from the butt and lower mid-section (as you'd expect) but the tip really did impress me with how it soaks up all that energy and fires a baited rig smooth and long.

Aim your cast high and the rod simply does the rest with ease

Blanks are slim and easy to handle



If you're a fan of balance weights in the butt section, you'll find three that are removable screwed in just behind the butt cap.

INTRIGUING

My time with the Endurance Pro RS2 was a little more intriguing. This outfit comes with two different tip sections. Your choice of a power and hybrid tip section means you have the ability to chop and change when the need arises... perfect if you're a match angler scratching for a bite or otherwise.

The rating on this rod shouts out loudly 112-225g, but again advises that 170g is favoured. I went with 175g on the power tip and reduced it to 150g with the hybrid option.

Again, casting is smooth and extremely easy to handle, but when loading I'd suggest going steady rather than trying to force a huge hit. There's absolutely no need to push hard, simply time it to perfection and the blank will easily manipulate a simple push into a long, hassle-free cast.



Even under difficult conditions, this rod is a true performer. My day on the beach saw a strong easterly gale testing my casting skills and, together with some crunching waves, it wasn't easy aiming a cast straight, especially when going high. However, when I kept it slightly lower it was more than capable of getting my rig where I needed it.

The pleasing aspect for me was the fact that my rig was never dragged from its anchor point, and that's a real plus when using a shore rod of this calibre.

IMPECCABLY FINISHED

Both outfits are impeccably finished with top-quality Fuji KWAG guides and DPS reel seats. Blanks are slim, easy to handle and sit neatly into a tripod.

Casting performance is brilliant – fishing performance even better even in difficult conditions. It's very easy to see why the range of three-piece outfits from Akios is gaining popularity and a strong following.

■ For more info or to locate your nearest Akios stockist, visit: www.akiosfishingtackle.com



TECH SPEC

- High-modulus carbon blanks
- Hybrid and power tips
- Fuji KWAG guides
- Fuji DPS reel seat
- Sectioned padded protective rod bag
- Powerful casting ratings



Thinking big

A range of custom rigs for taming monster fish

GIVEN THE INTEREST IN FISHING for large skate and sharks, it is hardly surprising that there has been an increase in custom-made terminal rigs for fish typically weighing more than 100lb.

I've seen and used numerous traces that have varied in quality from very good, to adequate and even best forgotten. Those produced by Alain Storey are among the best I've seen.

I like the fact that none are what is known as tether rigs. A coastlock clip is supplied with each leader to attach the lead weight. If the fish breaks the line, the heavy sinker will run off the broken end of line, and not remain tethered to the trace and burden the fish. Alain does supply inline lead weights from 3-100z, if required.

COMPONENTS

The workmanship, especially the heavy-duty crimping, is exceptional. Designed to sustain and survive heavy pressure over long periods of time, the rigs include the finest components, such as alloy and thick wall double-barrel brass crimps, along with anti-chaff springs and thimbles – essential when wear and tear takes its toll on every item.

For example, the skate trace has a Mustad 3406 size 12/0 hook, which has been de-barbed, which is not easy on very large hooks, and a ball bearing swivel rated at 300lb. There is a 300lb mono leader and 250lb Hi-Catch mono hook trace.

The leader is designed as a wind-on. It features a spliced braided loop at the end,



which is attached directly to a Bimini twist or spider hitch at the end of the reel line. Wind-on leaders are universally used on big-game boats because they aid the handling of big fish at the side of the boat. Cost for the skate trace is £3.50 (£14.50 with leader).

The shark trace is constructed using 480lb, 7x7 strand stainless steel wire, and

incorporates a high-quality ball-bearing swivel rated at 550lb. It terminates in a size 15/0 Mustad circle hook. The standard leader consists of 25ft of 400lb wire, but, on request, can be made from 250lb to 1,000lb nylon. Cost for a basic shark hook trace is £6.50 (£20 with leader).

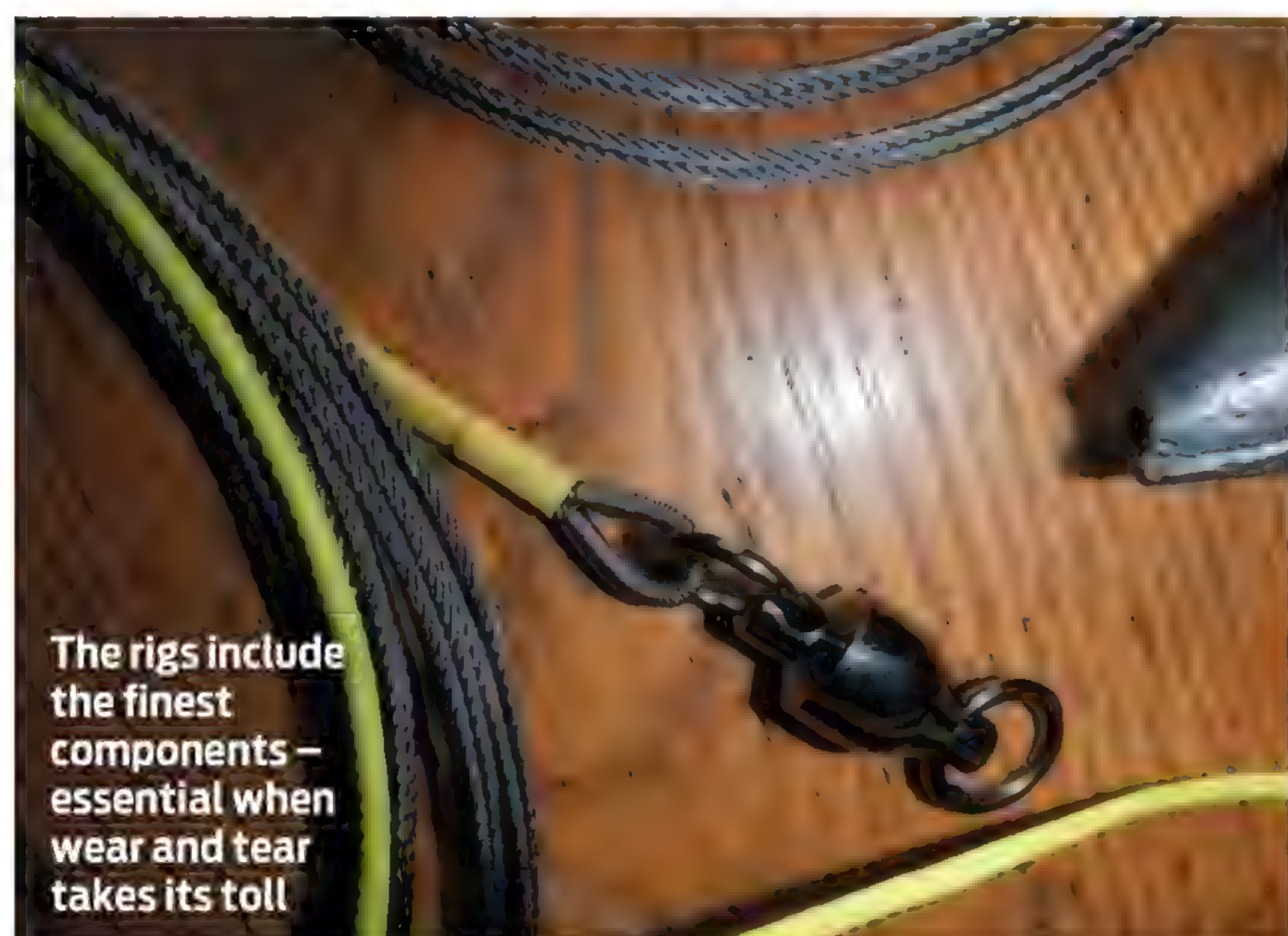
Alain also makes tope and conger rigs, along with a range of wind-on mono leaders in various breaking strains.

Anyone requiring further evidence of the quality of these traces should consider the fact that the world record Greenland shark of 1,257lb, caught off a kayak by Joel Abrahamsson, was hooked on an all-wire wind-on leader and hook trace made by Alain.

Contact Alain Storey Specialist Tackle, tel: 07932 394971 or through his Facebook page. ■



A coastlock clip is supplied with each leader to attach the lead weight



The rigs include the finest components – essential when wear and tear takes its toll



The workmanship is exceptional

5 surface lures for bass fishing

Expert choices for successful lure sport

IF THE SWIRL, SMASH AND HIT WHEN a bass inhales your lure off the top doesn't momentarily stop your heart for a second or two, then I suggest you get yourself a medical examination.

That unseen hit from a bass is exciting in many different ways, but for lots of

anglers it is surface fishing that is the most adrenaline-fuelled.

A few anglers reckon surface lures tend to catch smaller bass, but that isn't true. My largest shore-caught bass so far came off the top, and I know many very good bass anglers who have caught a lot of big bass on surface lures too.

There are any number of bass fishing lures being sold now, but here are my five favourite surface lures for you to try in 2020. They all respond well to a walk-the-dog (WTD) kind of action, and, yes, while poppers work for bass, I've come around to WTD style surface lures as being more successful.



WHIPLASH FACTORY SPITTIN' WIRE (95MM, 15.5G)

A very good Spanish bass angler contacted me a couple of years ago and urged me to track down this strange-looking surface lure and give it a go. Am I am glad I did, because it was responsible for my biggest shore-caught bass. You don't need big lures to catch big bass.

It doesn't look like it, but this Spittin' Wire absolutely flies, and you can work it across the top from almost static in a bit of current to really splashy if required.

I prefer it fished with a slowish to medium WTD sort of action. Bass can often inhale this lure with such intent that I have struggled to get the hooks out. Therefore, I would urge you to crush the barbs on this Spittin' Wire.

Price: From £22.99

SEADRA LAUNCER (165MM 19G)

Relatively new to the market, but already I feel uncomfortable leaving this surface lure behind. Launcher absolutely flies, and I really like how it's a lure that still gets out there really well if you don't time your cast perfectly.

You can work this lure with variations from a subtle side-to-side action to a very splashy WTD that can really get the bass going sometimes.

By no means am I saying that you are going to catch all your bass on surface lures at range: rather I prefer a surface lure that casts well and with which I can cover a lot of water. If I am trying to target a very specific area, I also like to be able to cast beyond, if possible, and not spook the bass so much.

Price: From £14.99



LUCKY CRAFT GUNFISH 115 (115MM, 19G)

A surface lure that I have fished with a fair bit and had some nice bass on, but I don't actually use it enough even though I know all about a lot of big bass coming to this killer surface lure. The Lucky Craft Gunfish comes in a few different sizes and weights, but I like the 115mm/19g version for our

bass fishing. If you catch this lure right it casts well, and while it looks impressive when you work it with quite a splashy WTD kind of action, I think the Gunfish works better for our bass when you slow things down and fish it a bit more deliberately.
Price : From £15.99



IMA SALT SKIMMER (110MM, 14G)

For a while the little IMA Salt Skimmer was the surface lure I would take out bass fishing above all others. I hear reports from certain parts of the UK from anglers who are not very successful on this thing, but from my experience, the Salt Skimmer is absolutely lethal.

For a relatively small surface lure it casts incredibly well, and you can also fish it in surprisingly rough conditions. I have spent a lot of time bass fishing with this lure and I would hazard a guess that over the years it's been my most successful surface lure.

Price: From £17.99



XORUS PATCHINKO II (140MM, 27G) AND XORUS PATCHINKO 125 (125MM, 18G)

I am cheating a bit here by including two lures. I would hazard a guess that the original Patchinko II from the French brand Xorus has been the best-selling and most successful surface lure for bass in the UK for a number of years.

It casts a mile when you catch it right, it can cope with some very lively seas, and bass just love it. I don't use this lure

in calm conditions because I think it can land a bit heavily and probably spook the fish, but when there is some chop or wind about, I wouldn't go out bass fishing without a Patchinko II in my box.

The newer and slightly smaller Patchinko 125 is lethal and casts incredibly well. I often find myself turning to this model over the larger

Patchinko II. The 125 version lands that bit quieter, which I like, and a few times now I have seen it out-fish its bigger brother.

I have caught bass on a lot of different colours, but pushed to choose only one, it would be the popular and very successful 500G colour.

Price: From £18.99

COMPLETING THE GEAR

■ **ROD:** There isn't one type of lure fishing rod that you have to use when fishing surface lures, but I find that a rod of 9ft 6in and shorter makes things easier on your wrist and arms especially. My lure rod length of choice is around 9ft long.

I prefer a rod with more of a stiffish tip that doesn't 'collapse' into the lure when you are twitching it from side to side.

There's no need to buy a new rod just because you fancy a go at some surface fishing. You can use a lure rod you already have and then, over time, you begin to specialise a bit more.

■ **REEL:** I fish mostly with spinning reels around the Shimano 2500/3000 (same size) and Shimano 4000 sizes, with the smaller 3000 being a favourite. Many lure rods are so light and responsive these days that a smaller reel can work just fine on a longer 9ft 6in rod. I also like the Penn Slammer II or Spinfisher VI.

■ **LINE:** I prefer fishing surface lures with braid mainline rather than mono. That lack of stretch in braid, I think, makes for a far easier and more efficient experience.

Remember that for the most part, surface lures need to be worked – they want to WTD and so on. Of course, you need to help the lure through the action you impart with your rod tip. A rod and reel outfit that sits nice and lightly in your hands is going to help here.



DON'T BE IN A HURRY

The number one trick to successful surface lure fishing, outside of the obvious where and when you might find some bass, is patience.

I don't mean putting hours and hours in trying to catch a fish. No, I am talking about not being in a mad rush to strike a swirl on your lure the moment it happens. This can be difficult to resist sometimes because it's so visually exciting when a bass comes up and smashes or swirls on your surface lure.

If your rod suddenly slams over, then it's usually 'fish on' and there's no need to wait. Sometimes bass will swirl and slash repeatedly at a surface lure and you need to keep fishing it or sometimes try stopping it dead, and so on. Wait, wait, wait for your rod tip to slam over and then set the hooks. Welcome to the addiction! ■



Boat anglers can choose the 8ft 8in two-piece DB1 10-20lb outfit

Get a superb shore or boat rod for just £75!



Take advantage of this incredible shore or boat rod deal, saving you £105

THE DB range of shore and boat rods has caused quite a stir and proven to be incredibly popular. Designed by Sea Angler contributor Dave Barham, you can expect quality fittings and a top performance.

For the shore angler, the DB2 shore rod is a powerhouse of a rod designed for whacking out large baits and landing big fish through testing terrain. This outfit will easily tame cod, bull huss, rays and smoothhounds, especially if you're fishing into deep water and strong tides.

It's a two-piece rod with a total length of

13ft 8oz and rated for casting 4-8oz. Equipped with quality lightweight guides and coasters, it also comes with its own heavy-duty, two-section rod bag.

Boat anglers can choose the 8ft 8in two-piece DB1 10-20lb outfit. Packing heaps of the power in the butt and middle sections, the final 20in of the tip section offers a superior softness and give to tire most species of fish. It's brilliant for casting 10oz when uptiding in search of large rays, tope and cod. It's also an ideal outfit if you prefer drifting the banks for turbot and big bass. Even when

downtiding, this rod will certainly outgun conger eels over 50lb. Equipped with top-quality fittings and a two-piece, heavy-duty rod bag.

Normally, these rods would set you back £179.99 each in the shops, but they could be yours today for just £75 each – putting a cool £104.99 back into your pocket and a deal you cannot afford to miss.

Ordering couldn't be easier - we've created three easy ways (below).

Give the helpful staff at the Fishing Megastore a call, place your order and leave the rest to them.



For the shore angler, the DB2 is a powerhouse of a rod

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2. CALL 0141 212 8880 and quote 00164SA

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*Please make cheques payable to 'Glasgow Angling Centre Ltd'.

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BOAT STORE

A guide to new products for anglers going afloat

REMOTE BATTERY MONITORING

Isle of Wight innovation company Chargemetrix has launched an automatic remote monitoring system for all 12-volt batteries. It delivers real-time remote reporting on battery voltage, temperature, and even the vessel's location almost anywhere in the world.

As any boat owner knows, there's nothing more frustrating than a flat battery. Vessels left in boat parks or on moorings are vulnerable to power discharge from forgotten lights and the effects of cold weather. Knowing what's happening and getting advance warning, even when you are miles away, provides peace of mind.

Monitoring batteries can significantly extend battery life and reduce cost and waste by prompting the owner to take action before degradation occurs.

Chargemetrix enables boat owners to check battery status via an app from anywhere in the world, on any internet-connected device. The app provides real-time information plus a 30-day history and can send push alerts such as low voltage or change of location.

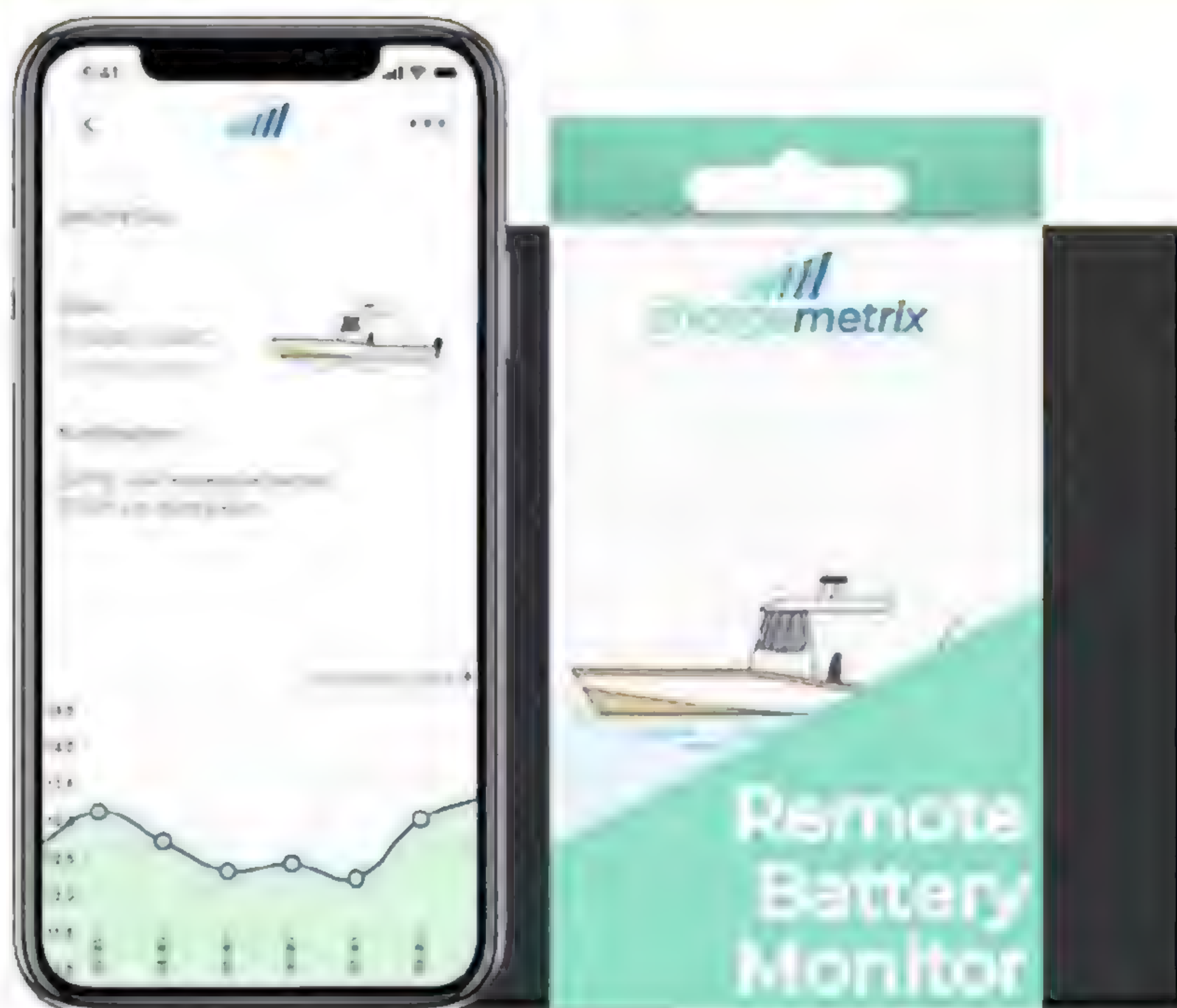
This product comprises a water-resistant sensor with a built-in mobile antenna plus a web app. The hardware takes less than 20 minutes to install and requires no specialist knowledge. Once connected, the user registers on the app, and the data feed starts immediately.

The Chargemetrix has been designed from the ground up to reduce carbon dioxide and waste. Extending the life of existing batteries reduces the burden on raw materials and the impact of emissions for shipping new products. The Chargemetrix hardware is manufactured from a plant-based bioplastic with fully recyclable packaging. As well as being fully recyclable, the slim, light packaging

minimises shipping impact, and is suitable for normal mail deliveries.

Available direct from their website and all good chandlers for £49.99 plus £3.99 per month mobile connection.

For more info, visit: www.chargemetrix.com



PERSPECTIVE MODE IS 'PERFECT FOR SHALLOW WATER'

Garmin has launched a new Perspective Mode feature and transducer-positioning accessory for its award-winning Panoptix LiveScope™ sonar.

As the first real-time scanning sonar for recreational fishing, LiveScope delivers live images of structure, bait and fish swimming around and below the boat, even while stationary. Now, in addition to the existing LiveScope Forward and Down Modes, anglers can use the new Perspective Mode for overhead visibility that's perfect for shallow water.

With the new Perspective Mode mount, the LiveScope LVS32 transducer can be easily adjusted to fit an angler's fishing techniques and preferences, no tools required, and the chartplotter will automatically detect what mode is being used. Simply turn the transducer sideways to enable the new 'top down' perspective mode to see a wide view of what's in front of the boat up to 50 feet away; point the transducer forward to see around the boat; and point it down to see directly below the boat.

All three modes provide sharp,

real-time scanning sonar images of fish moving toward or away from the boat and below the surface with remarkable target separation and clarity.

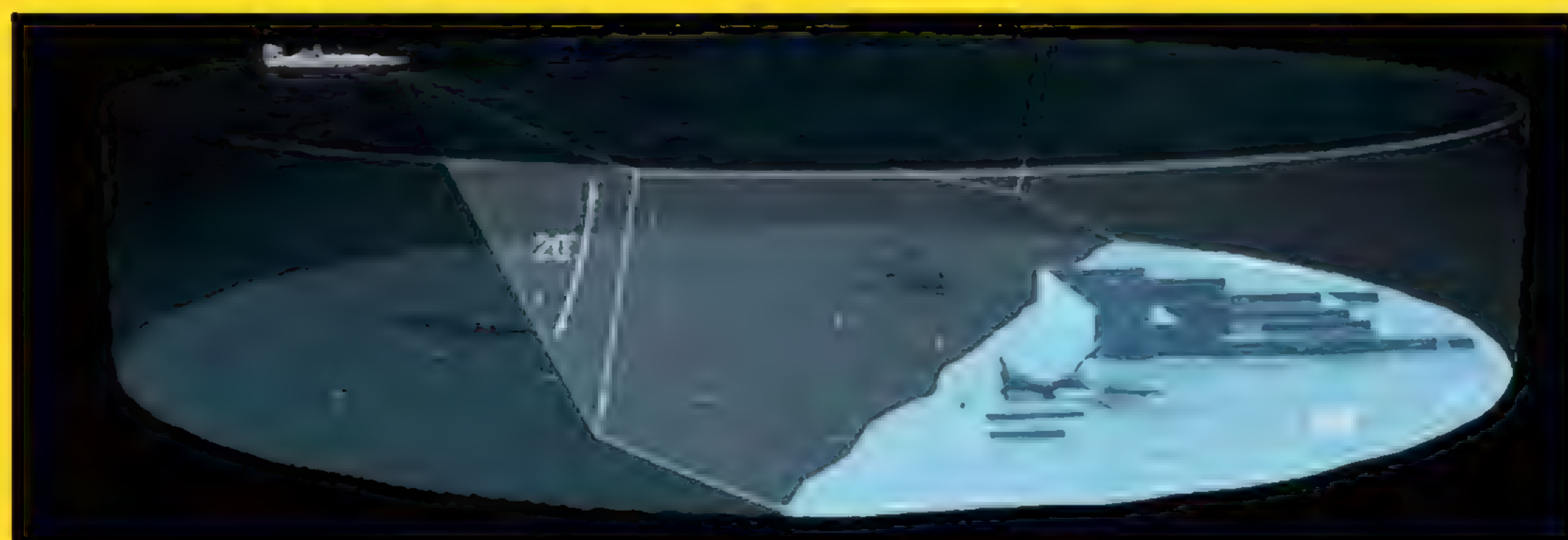
LiveScope is also equipped with an attitude heading reference system (AHRS) that constantly adjusts sonar beams to compensate for boat motion, so even in rough conditions, anglers will still see a steady sonar image.

Coupled with a Panoptix LiveScope System, the Perspective Mode mount accessory is required for anglers who want to take advantage of the Perspective Mode technology. The LiveScope System

includes a compact GLS 10 sonar black box with an LVS32 transducer, and a simple plug-and-play Garmin Marine Network connector for integration with a compatible Garmin chartplotter.

The new LiveScope Perspective Mode mount retails for £86.99. LiveScope is compatible with GPSMAP 8400/8600 series MFDs, 7400/7600 series, 7x2, 9x2, 12x2 Touch, the 7x2 Plus, 9x2 Plus, 12x2 Plus series, Echomap Plus 75cv/75sv/95sv series, EUHD 75cv, 75sv, 95sv series and the Ultra series.

For more info, videos and images, visit: garmin.com/panoptix



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The stunning fjords and dramatic open coastline offer the chance to target huge cod, ling, coalfish and halibut plus other large species such as wolf fish, haddock, lumb and plaice.

Here at Guided Fishing Norway, we have researched hundreds of untouched venues and the results have been simply amazing. We will drive you to these productive marks and show you the best tactics and tackle to use to connect with some monster fish.

We have guided several anglers to World and European shore-caught records including a giant cod of 66lb and a colossal halibut of 153lb. The potential to land your biggest ever fish from the shore in Bodo is huge and we guarantee you will enjoy every single moment of your visit.

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- ✓ Tackle, clothing and boots available to hire on request
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2019 **PENN** SEA LEAGUE

The latest results from Britain's biggest event for shore match anglers

PENN PLUS

WESTON OUTCASTS SAC 10TH COD OPEN

Portishead to Clevedon, Somerset, 97 anglers

With Storm Jorge hitting the Somerset coast the day before the match, a few anglers were put off, but 97 hardy competitors remained undeterred, even during a hailstorm.

Fishing was quite good in some areas, with decent bags taken from Portishead and the Walton Bay area.

A total of 51 cod were weighed in by 27 anglers. Winner of the £600 prize for the heaviest bag of cod was Dai Loder, of Newport, with five fish for 15-8-0.

Runner-up, winning £300, was Nathan Gray, of Weston-super-Mare, with six fish for 14-12-0.

James Brown, of Bristol, was third and earned £200 for five fish for 14-8-0, which included the biggest cod of 5lb 8oz.

■ **Result:** 1 Dai Loder, Newport, 5 fish, 15-8-0 (10pts); 2 Nathan Gray, Weston-super-Mare, 6, 14-12-0 (9); 3 Jason Brown, Bristol, 5, 14-8-0, including heaviest cod, 5-8-0 (8); 4 Gary Withey, Bristol, 5, 13-2-0 (7); 5 Keith Warren, Clevedon, 4, 11-5-0 (6); 6 James Madsen, Bedminster, 4, 10-5-0 (5); 7 Mike Parsons, Wells, 3, 8-0-0 (4); 8 Steve King, Bristol, 2, 7-4-0 (3); 9 Brogan Bayford, Bristol, 5-9-0 (2); 10 Andy Madsen, Clevedon, 2, 5-7-0 (1).

ASSO FIVE MAN LEAGUE ROUND 2 & OPEN

Hastings & St Leonards beaches, East Sussex, 39 anglers

Winner was Joe Wales, who was fishing at peg B12 at the bottom of the angling club where he caught 17 dogfish and a whiting for 21-4-0.

Runner-up was Jacob Gainey, on peg B13, who landed 15 fish for 12-2-0. Third went to Mick Tapsell at peg 22 with 9-1-0.

Three anglers – Ralph Crosby, Mick Tapsell and Saul Page, shared the heaviest fish prize, having all caught bass of 2lb 4oz.

■ **Result:** 1 Joe Wales, Shoreham, 18 fish, 21-4-0 (3pts); 2 Jacob Gainey, Canterbury, 15, 12-2-0 (2); 3 Mick Tapsell, 9-1-0 (1). Zones – Mark Rogers, Maidstone, 6-12-0; Ralph Crosby, Hastings AC, 8-9-0 & Julian French, Brighton, 4-6-0.

FOUNTAIN OPEN

Princes Parade, Deal, Kent, 71 anglers

A catch of 21 dogfish and some whiting for 1,319 points at peg 74 secured the win for England international Saul Page.

Second was Louie Smith with rays and dogfish from zone 1, with Tom Wells taking a similar catch for 1,209 points in zone 3. Zone 2 winner was Ben Arnold with 1,015 points.

■ **Result:** 1 Saul Page, Deal, 1319pts (7pts); 2 Louie Smith, Deal, 1279 (6); 3 Tom Wells, Deal, 1209 (5). Zone – Ben Arnold, Brighton, 1015 (2).

HORNSEA SAC ANYFISH ANYWHERE OPEN

East Yorkshire, 121 anglers

Brothers Paul and Matt Garbutt had the top four heaviest fish in this rover when they fished at Bridlington Pier.

Paul caught a 3.13kg thornback ray to win the event and had another of 2.73kg, with Matt second with a 2.85kg ray, and adding a second of 2.60kg. Third place for Penn points went to Ben Laws, of Whitby, who caught a 2.25kg ray near Bridlington.

■ **Result:** 1 Paul Garbutt, Skelton, 3.13kg (11pts); 2 Matt Garbutt, Skelton, 2.85kg (10); 3 Ben Laws, Whitby, 2.25kg (9).

SOUTHERN LEAGUE RND 2 & OPEN

Highcliffe/Friars, Christchurch, Dorset, 82 anglers

Two undulate rays, both weighing 10lb 8oz, helped Mike Taylor and Russ Preston take first and second places.

Mike, who was in zone C at peg 61, included three rays in his 26-4-8 total, while Russ, in zone B at peg 33, finished on 11-11-12.

The most fish were caught by Chris Clark, in zone D at peg 79, where his catch of pouting, dogfish and whiting for 11-5-4 earned him third place. Zone A winner was Dan Mogridge with 7-10-8 from peg 22.

■ **Result:** 1 Mike Taylor, Southampton, 26-4-8 (8pts); 2 Russ Preston, Bristol, 11-11-12 (7); 3 Chris Clark, Sway, 11-5-4 (6). Zones – Dan Mogridge, Fareham, 7-10-8 (3).



NEWS IN BRIEF

TROUT TREAT

■ Neil Cutler, from Gateshead, caught a 23cm sea-trout, the event's biggest round fish, at Arnside, Cumbria, during a tough round 2 of the Bispham Angling Sea League. Winner Pete Judge, of Barrow, caught four fish for 114cm.

WIN FOR CHRIS

■ Former England angler Chris Clark won the replacement match for the postponed New Milton open, with 586cm. Second in the match at Friars Cliff and Steamer Point was Ben Daniel with 429cm, including a 50cm bass.

SMALL IS GOOD

■ It was small fish all around in the East Anglian Teams of Five match at Dunwich, Suffolk. Winner Barry Diaper, of Ipswich, had three for 2-3-8, with his heaviest being a 1lb 10oz ray. Runner-up Mark Pinder, also Ipswich, had two for 1-6-0.

PENN SHORTS

■ **Bispham Angling Sea League rnd 2 & open, New Barns, Arnside, Cumbria, 37 anglers:** 1 Pete Judge, Barrow, 4 fish, 14cm (3pts); 2 Andy Young, Lancaster, 4, 77 (2); 3 Stuart Dewhurst, Preston, 3, 66cm (1).

■ **Bispham Angling Sea League rnd 3 & open, Gynn Wall, Blackpool, Lancs, 16 anglers:** 1 Steve Trish, Liverpool & David Hutchinson, Morecambe, both 84cm (1pts); 3 Stuart Dewhurst, Preston, 72cm.

■ **Blackdown SAC open, Minehead to Blue Anchor, Somerset, 52 anglers:** 1 James Waygood, Watchet, 191pts (5pts); 2 Steve Liddle, Williton, 156 (4); 3 Mike Parsons, Wells, 148 (3).

■ **Chesil League rnd 1 & open, Masonic, Portland, Dorset, 28 anglers:** 1 Ben Bradstock, Honiton, 6 fish, 14-15-0, including heaviest fish, 7-5-0 conger (2pts); 2 Ian Dancey, Waterloo, 3, 6-5-0, included 5lb thornback ray (1); 3 Mike Taylor, Southampton, 3, 5-0-0.

■ **East Anglian Teams of Five open, Dunwich, Suffolk, 64 anglers:** 1 Barry Diaper, Ipswich, 3 fish, 2-3-8, including heaviest fish, 1-10-0 ray (6pts); 2 Mark Pinder, Ipswich, 2, 1-10-0 (5); 3 Kevin Eley, Ipswich & Mark Gooch, Lowestoft, 5, 1-6-0 (both 4). Zones – Matt Lay-Flurrie, Brantham, 3, 1-1-8 & Chris Cannell, 2, 0-15-0 (both 2).

■ **Erskine Walkway open sweepstake, 34 anglers: no fish caught.**

■ **Kent Flounder League rnd 2 & open, Seasalter, Kent, 36 anglers:** 1 Mark Cousens, Bearstead, 136cm (3pts); 2 Trevor Back, Sheerness, 129cm (2); 3 Ian Reynolds, South

Benfleet, 123cm (1).

■ **Kent Flounder League rnd 3, Allhallows, Kent, 38 anglers:** 1 Tom Barfoot, Gillingham, 202cm (3pts); 2 Jim Maynard, Gillingham, 149cm (2); 3 Trevor Cousens, Bearstead, 139cm (1).

■ **Leinster Shore Spring/Summer League open, Kilmuckridge area, Co Wexford, 48 anglers:** 1 Alby Allan, South Shore, 277cm (4pts); 2 Tommy Fogarty, Raheny, 180cm (3); 3 Des Farrelly, South Shore, 143cm (2). Longest fish – Noel Fogarty, Dublin, 43cm codling (1).

■ **New Milton replacement open, Friars Cliff & Steamer Point, Dorset, 20 anglers:** 1 Chris Clark, Sway, 586cm (2pts); 2 Ben Daniel, Bournemouth, 429cm (1); 3 Ian Dancey, Waterloo, 315cm.

■ **North Norfolk National Sea League rnd 5 & open, Kelling, Norfolk, 34 anglers:** 1 Mike Watts, Ely, 37 fish, 10-2-10 (3pts); 2 George Smith, Grimsby, 30, 7-11-10 (2); 3 Kevin Green, Norwich, 31, 7-2-0 (1).

■ **North Norfolk National Sea League rnd 6 & open, Bacton, Norfolk, 26 anglers:** 1 Neil Smart, Gt Yarmouth, 15 fish, 3-11-5 (2pts); 2 Paul Marshall, Corby, 14, 3-5-0 (1); 3 Dave Burr, Croxton, 15, 3-2-0.

■ **Scottish FSA open cod rover, Arbroath, Angus, 16 anglers:** 1 Kevin Lewis, Arbroath, 9 fish, 21-3-0, including heaviest fish 6-2-0 cod (1pt); 2 Ian Crombie, Kirkcaldy, 3, 8-3-8; 3 David Cargil, 3, 7-13-0.

■ **Yorkshire FSA open, Withernsea, East Yorks, 10 anglers:** 1 Mike Suddaby, Hull, 10 fish, 5-14-4 (1pt); 2 Keith Mumby, Grimsby, 12, 5-0-12; 3 Keith Hodgson, Wakefield, 9, 3-9-4.

■ **The 27th Paul Roggeman European Open Beach Championship, Bridlington to Spurn, East Yorkshire, 1300 anglers:** 1 Troy Francis, Killarney, 2900g Sat, 1720g Sun, 4260g (30pts); 2 Mark Colman, Hornsea, 2875g, 1310g, 4185g (29); 3 William Ineson, Easington, 3415g, 3530g, 9345g (28); 4 Daniel Osborne, Barton, 730g, 3070g, 3800g (27); 5 Robert Whitehead, Goole, 3000g, 414g, 3415g (26); 6 Rich Lunn, Hornsea, 2730g, 380g, 3110g (25); 7 Mick Brockman, Hull, 1930g, 1095g, 3025g (24); 8 John Kelly, Mexborough, 2490g, 380g, 2870g (23); 9 Ashley Turner, Immingham, 1705g, 1145g, 2850g (22); 10 Andrew Cammish, Filey, 1645g, 1160g, 2805g (21).

HOW IT WORKS

■ With £10,000 in tackle prizes spread over the two divisions, points, based on entries, are awarded to the top three, section winners and captors of the largest fish caught in each designated Penn match.

Penn also awards a prize of a Spinfisher fixed-spool reel to the angler scoring the most points in matches shown in each issue.

If there is a tie, the winner will be the angler whose total is from the greatest number of results and is then chosen on merit by the editor. An angler can win only one reel during the year.

To win a prize you must be registered with the Penn Sea League – supply your name, address, phone and email.



Send fixtures, results and league registration by email to: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

MONTHLY WINNER

■ 582: Troy Francis, Killarney, 30pts

REMINDER

Penn Sea League entries will only be accepted from the match organiser or officials of the club concerned. If results are not returned to Sea Angler within a month of the event, the event will be declared void for Penn points.

LEADERBOARDS*

PREMIER DIVISION

Neil Cutler	Gateshead	30
Troy Francis	Killamey	30
Saul Page	Deal	27
Ben Arnold	Brighton	26
Julian Shambrook	Torquay	26
Keith Smith	Blyth	26
Rich Lunn	Homsea	25
Paul Whelan	Dublin	25
Russell Preston	Bristol	21
George Smith	Grimsby	21
Gareth Griffiths	Barrow	19
Ben Richards	Ramsey	18
Ged Stevens	Barrow	18
Darren Bond	Lancing	17
Joe Arch	Llanishen	16
Dean Ambler	-	15
Luke Ingle	Scarborough	15
Matthew Garbutt	Skelton	13
George Horner	Scarborough	13
Henry Randell	Bodham	13
Dave Chidzoy	Bridport	12
Tony Havill	Torbay	11
Chris Spall	Saxmundham	11
Bill Lindfield	Greasby	10
Dai Loder	Newport	10
Dave Shorthouse	Stafford	10
Rob Tuck	Holland on Sea	10
Chris Fisher	Aldbrough	9
Dave Lane	Weymouth	9
Nicky Robson	Wallsend	9
Nigel Scott	Canterbury	9
Jason Brown	Bristol	8
Richard Dorgan	Bristol	8
Luke Mooring	Dover	8
Steve Potts	Gosforth	8
Mike Taylor	Southampton	8
Gareth Gardiner	Sunderland	6
Louie Smith	Deal	6
Mark Taylor	Grimsby	6
Robbie Taylor	Deal	6
Lee Adams	Shotley	5
James Madsen	Bedminster	5
Mark Pinder	Ipswich	5
Tom Wells	Deal	5
Brett Cotter	Deal	4
Mark Gooch	Lowestoft	4
Kevin Lewis	Arbroath	4
Scott McCartney	Prestwick	4
Karl Nangle	Grimsby	4
Lee Collins	Gillingham	3
Alan Combe	Kirkcaldy	3
Colin Crosby	Hastings	3
David G Hutchinson	Morecambe	3
Dan Mogridge	Fareham	3
Sean Murray	Dublin	3
Matt White	Barrow	3
Trevor Back	Sheerness	2
Ben Bradstock	Honiton	2
Richard Burt	Clacton	2
Ralph Crosby	Hastings	2
Nathan Elliott	Dover	2
Mike Horn	Kirkcaldy	2

Chris O'Sullivan	Tralee	2
Adrian Bordianu	Taverham	1
Ian Dancey	Waterlooville	1
Stuart Dewhurst	Preston	1
Simon Drayton	Gainsborough	1
Chris Horn	Kirkcaldy	1
Andrew Madsen	Clevedon	1
Ian Reynolds	South Benfleet	1

Only those with points are listed.

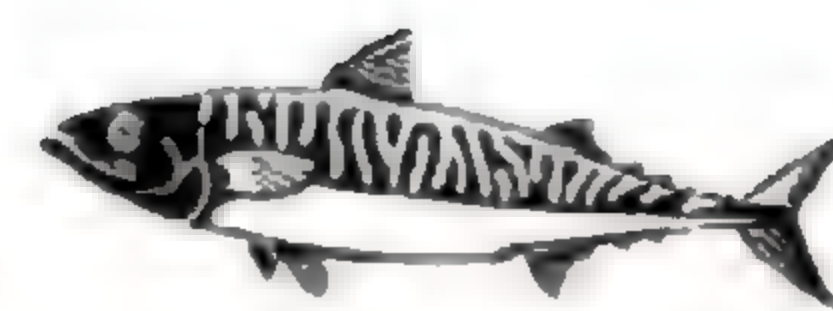
DIVISION ONE

D Bell	Newbiggin	29
Mark Colman	Homsea	29
Phil Grey	Alnwick	28
William Ineson	Easington	28
Simon Hill	Seaham	27
Daniel Osbourne	Barton	27
Robert Whitehead	Goole	26
Billy Foster	Newbiggin	25
Mick Brockman	Hedon	24
Adam Johnson	South Shields	24
Chris Guthrie	Cramlington	23
John Kelly	Mexborough	23
David Harvey	Newbiggin	22
Ashley Turner	Immingham	22
Andrew Cammish	Filey	21
Steve Hewitson	St Bees	21
Gavin Lockey	Amble	18
Gary Golightly	Peterlee	17
Daniel Swan	Sunderland	16
Andy Tymon	Scarborough	16
Dave Cross	Scarborough	14
Andrew Foster	Easington	14
Mike Hingston	DOE SAC	13
Nathan Brennan	-	13
Phil Arliss	Filey	12
Paul Garbutt	Skelton	11
Tony O'Neill	Saundersfoot	11
James Barratt	Hull	10
Mark Griffiths	Gorseinon	10
Stuart Allen	Tenby	9
Nathan Gray	Weston-s-Mare	9
Ben Laws	Whitby	9
Alby Allan	South Shore SAC	8
Chris Clark	Sway	8
Trevor Cousens	Bearsted	8
Malcolm Penny	Waterlooville	8
Phil Steer	Portsmouth	8
John Austin	Ipswich	7
John T Bell	Newbiggin	7
Ian Bowell	Ipswich	7
Ben Davies	Llantwit Major	7
Alan Hobbs	Roving Rods	7
Mike Parsons	Wells	7
Dave Stewart	Gosport	7
Gary Withey	Bristol	7
Dan Butt	Axe Valley	6
Barry Diaper	Stowmarket	6
Jacob Gainey	Canterbury	6
Chris Robson	Cramlington	6
Jamie Sergeant	Swansea	6
Paul Simmons	Faversham	6
Joe Wales	Shoreham	6

Kevin Warner	Horncastle	6
Keith Warren	Clevedon	6
Joe Carley	Dublin	5
Stuart Holden	Three Counties	5
Craig Ogilvie	North Berwick	5
Nigel Putbrace	Cardiff	5
Mark Shortt	Bray SAC	5
James Waygood	Watchet	5
Kevin Eley	Ipswich	4
Darragh Farrell	South Shore	4
Steve Liddle	Williton	4
Keith Ball	Sunderland	3
Tom Barfoot	Gillingham	3
Jane Cantwell	Ireland	3
Stuart Cresswell	Ayr	3
Darren Dixon	Portsmouth	3
Ned Fitzpatrick	Kerry	3
Ciaran Fogarty	Dublin	3
Tommy Fogarty	Raheny	3
Kevin Green	Norwich	3
Paul Heffernan	Ballybrack	3
Ian Hopper	Eastbourne	3
Peter Judge	Barrow	3
Steve King	Bristol	3
Jamie Morgan	Eastbourne	3
John Osbourne	Waterville	3
Barry Roche	Wexford	3
Dave Rose	Bristol	3
Malcolm Stote	Lymington	3
Russell Taylor	East Dereham	3
Mike Watts	Ely	3
James Allman	Tralee	2
Jason Banham	Ipswich	2
Brogan Bayford	Bristol	2
Andy Brown	Edinburgh	2
Chris Cannell	Ipswich	2
Russell Clark	Rochford	2
Vince Crawford	Snape	2
Des Farrelly	South Shore SAC	2
Adam Kingdon	Ipswich	2
Matt Lay-Flurrie	Brantham	2
Janis Liseckis	Kerry	2
Jim Maynard	Gillingham	2
Dale McCallum	Edinburgh	2
Liz Conway McMahon	Kerry 2	2
Karl McNicoll	Edinburgh	2
Neil Smart	Gt Yarmouth	2
Michael Suddaby	Hull	2
Andy Young	Lancaster	2
Ben Daniel	-	1
Noel Fogarty	Dublin	1
Ray Jeffery	Sheerness	1
Paul Marshall	Corby	1
Keith Mumby	Grimsby	1
Connie O'Sullivan	Kerry	1
Eddie Ryder	Lancing	1
Mick Tapsell	Folkestone	1
Steve Trish	Liverpool	1
Sandy Wason	Ayr	1
Tony Watters	Aberdeen	1
Neil Wilkinson	Maryport	1

Only those with points are listed.

Leaderboards – all matches up to March 20



SPOTLIGHT ON....

National Species League



If you fancy some competitive days out on some leading charter boats, give this fun event a try...

STARTED IN 2005 BY A SMALL group of anglers who wanted monthly boat species competitions, the National Species League went regional in 2019.

Set up as an opportunity to meet and compete regularly, with annual trophies and prizes, the catch-and-release events are often held on Fridays to increase skippers' income and keep costs down.

The League takes place from various ports and uses charter boats who specialise in species events. Organisers try to cover as many types of fishing as possible, ranging from deep-sea anchoring for conger eels and tope, to drifting wrecks, bank fishing for flatfish, and inshore fishing for wrasse and mini species.

Most competitions cover a number of fishing styles over different marks. During the summer the anglers regularly catch more than twenty species a day.

Each competition is based on the winner of each boat gaining 100 per cent, and all others scoring a percentage of the winner's score. With 12 scores across the year (if events are not lost to bad weather) the annual winner

of the Species League UK is the person with the best total from nine events. All species count and there are no size limits. There are points scored for each fish and bonus points for each species caught.

There are other prizes given annually, including one for the person catching the most species during the season. Regional prizes are also awarded.

Of course, the league isn't all about winning because it consists of a good mixture of seasoned anglers, some new and some young members all competing and learning.

REGIONS

The Species League became regional in 2019, giving more opportunity for anglers to compete without travelling great distances.

All the regional dates and venues score towards the overall UK championship.

■ **South West (Lyme Regis to Minehead):** Boats booked from May until November once a month. The regional champion is the person with the best eight scores from 11 events.

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/594190171098187/

■ **South (Dorset and Hampshire):** One

or two boats booked with either eight or 10 places available from February until December once a month. The regional champion will have the best nine scores from 10 events.

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/speciesleague/

■ **South East (Kent and Sussex):** One boat booked with either seven or eight places available from May until November once a month. A second boat may be organised. The regional champion will have the best five scores from six events.

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/376824656211187/

■ **Wales (South and West):** Six or seven events, with the champion based on the best six scores.

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/1075665312616178/

■ **North West, including North Wales:** Hopefully, six events throughout the year with the best five scores counting for the regional championship.

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/204187300535927/

■ **North East, North West, Scotland:** To be confirmed.

SPECIES LEAGUE FIXTURES

Boat anglers in all regions are able to take part in these matches. There are no joining fees, just a one-off £60 deposit for new members who book their first trip. All regions can be fished and you can choose the ports and dates.

To get the most species, you need to travel to different ports at various times of the year. Book your spaces early to avoid disappointment. One of the first two matches was cancelled.

■ **February 21:** Minehead/Poole, cancelled due to weather.

■ **March 27:** Weymouth, aboard Snapper, Meerkat and Supanova.

■ **April 24:** Lyme Regis, Poole and Tenby, aboard Pegusus, Piscary and Patriot.

■ **May 22:** Newquay, Lymington, Littlehampton, Swansea, Portpatrick, Colwyn Bay, aboard Atlantis, White Maiden, Lynander, Jennifer's Pride, Lyn Marie, Lucky Dip II and Incentrive.

■ **June 26:** Poole, Rye, Tenby, aboard Piscary, Patriot, Paganina and Incentive.

■ **July 17 and 24:** Weymouth, Minehead, Sheerness, Swansea, Colwyn Bay, aboard Snapper, Teddie Boy, Dentex, Lyn Marie and Incentive.

■ **August 21:** Lyme Regis, Poole, Littlehampton, Cardiff, aboard Piscary, Pegusus, Lynander and Sea Leopard.

■ **September 4:** Newquay, aboard Atlantis, Mystique and Che Sara Sara.

September 5: Newquay, aboard Atlantis, Mystique and Che Sara Sara.

■ **October 23:** Minehead, Weymouth, Sheerness, Tenby, aboard Snapper, Teddie Boy, Dentex and Patriot.

■ **November 13:** Poole, Lyme, Littlehampton and Cardiff, aboard Piscary, Pegusus, Lynander and Sea Leopard.

■ **December 4:** Weymouth, aboard Snapper.

■ **Learn more:** Facebook group: [facebook.com/groups/speciesleague](https://www.facebook.com/groups/speciesleague)
Twitter: [@SpeciesLeague](https://twitter.com/SpeciesLeague)
Email: speciesleague@gmail.com

WHAT'S ON

APRIL

● 4: North Kerry SAC open, Knightstown pontoons, 2pm-6pm, James Allman 00353 (0)87 776 9456.

4: Poole Bay Plaice Chase, kayak meet and competition in aid of Heroes on the Water, Sandbanks, longest plaice, suitable for all, PBSBAC support boat in attendance, £10 entry, visit Facebook, Poole Kayak Fishing.

● 4: Skua AC open, Talacre, 1.15pm-5.15pm, Sat, 2pm-6pm Sun, meet at beach car park, book through Skua's Facebook page or Ben 07393 201284.

● 4: New Milton SFC open, Avon beach, 7pm-midnight, £1,000 prize fund (subject to attendance), pegged, C&R, £20 all-in, sign in from 5.30pm at sunken car park, Avon beach, BH23 4DU, £1,000 prize fund (subject to attendance), Lawrence Darke 07759 829226.

● 4-5: Norfolk Sea Angling Festival, Cley to Walcott (excluding Cromer Pier), 10am-3pm both days, biggest fish rover, £500 1st, Dene Conway 01263 838248.

5: Hastings & St Leonards AA thornback boat comp, 8am-4pm, 01424 430120.

● 5: Chesil Beach flatfish open, 11am-5pm, Abbotsbury, £15 entry, £5 juniors and OAPs, £500 1st,

£250 longest fish, sign on from 9am at Abbotsbury car park, Weymouth Angling Centre, 01305 777771 or www.weymouthangling.com/events.

● 5: SA1 Fishing Club open, Swansea Breakwater, 1.30pm-5.30pm, 10 cash prizes, longest single fish, all cards to be presented by 6.30pm at Ship Inn, St Thomas, back-up venue is Swansea beach (369 café to town hall), book at Mainwaring Angling Centre or H R Jones, Clydach, all week, or from 11.30am on day at McDonald's, Clive 07929 389088.

● 5: Bristol Channel FSA spring open, Blue Anchor to Minehead, 3.30pm-7.30pm, all anglers must sign in from 1.30pm at Hobby Horse, Minehead, TA24 5QP, £15 entry, juniors free, check www.bcfsa.org.uk for information or James 07812 994374.

● 10 Asso Five Man League rnd 3 of 4 & open, Hastings & St Leonards beaches, 11am-4pm, lug, fish and squid baits only, £50 team of five, £10 individual league (best three from four), £20 entry, NSL team qualifier, Colin Crosby 07971 252652.

● 11: Senhouse Street SAC Easter open, Perch Light to Grasslot pier (pier excluded), 9am-1pm, £1,000 for heaviest flatfish, £500 heaviest bag, register from 7am-8.45am at Senhouse

Street WMC, CA14 2SJ, £20 entry, Mark 07775 637801 or Mike 07548 949140.

● 12: Bass Rock SAC open, Belhaven beach, 10am-2pm, register 8am-9am at West Barns Bowling Club, EH42 1UH, 80 pegs, cath & release, £10 entry, £5 optional longest fish pool, children free with paying adult, prize for all children, 18cm minimum flatfish, 20cm roundfish, book only, Craig 07840 770643 or Barry 07813 924555.

● 12: Whitby Summer League rnd 1 of 6 & open, Saltburn pier to Filey Coble Landing, 4pm-8pm, heaviest fish match, weigh in by 8.30pm at Fleece car park, Church St, Whitby, £40 all-in for six matches, James 07773 702111.

● 18: Southern League rnd 4 of 12 & open, Gosport, 7pm-midnight, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2020 League entry £20, booking ends one hour before start, Darren 07919 073 232, Nick 07870 922 216, Mike 07983 579 596, Ian 07736 004 714 or Ant 07775 691 916.

● 18: Tralee Bay SAC open, Ballybunion, 5pm-9pm, Chris O'Sullivan 00353 (0)85 1532770.

● 19: East Anglian Teams of Five open, Shingle Street, 10am-3pm, Rob Tuck 07855 848967.

● 19: Kent Flounder League rnd 4, Gravesend, 8.30am-1pm, register from 7am at Sea School gate (DA12 2QA), measure & return, book only,

PENN PLUS MATCH

April 10: Seaham SAC Good Friday open, Hendon groyne to South Stack, Blast Beach, 1pm-6pm, heaviest single fish, £10 entry, £3 optional prizes, Ian Ainsley 0191 581 0321.

TIDES FOR APRIL & MAY

LONDON BRIDGE *

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APRIL

1	WED	07.20	6.24	19.42	5.82
2	THU	08.18	6.02	20.49	5.60
3	FRI	09.39	5.90	22.27	5.62
4	SAT	11.12	6.15	23.56	6.03
5	SUN	***	***	12.26	6.61
6	MON	01.03	6.53	13.28	7.01
7	TUE	01.57	6.93	14.20	7.27
8	WED	02.43	7.21	15.07	7.40
9	THU	03.27	7.41	15.51	7.44
10	FRI	04.08	7.55	16.33	7.38
11	SAT	04.48	7.57	17.13	7.19
12	SUN	05.30	7.41	17.54	6.87
13	MON	06.12	7.10	18.34	6.48
14	TUE	06.58	6.69	19.18	6.10
15	WED	07.51	6.27	20.12	5.76
16	THU	08.57	5.93	21.24	5.52
17	FRI	10.16	5.80	22.56	5.56
18	SAT	11.38	5.97	***	***
19	SUN	00.13	5.90	12.46	6.31
20	MON	01.09	6.28	13.36	6.57
21	TUE	01.52	6.55	14.15	6.68
22	WED	02.29	6.72	14.48	6.73
23	THU	03.02	6.86	15.18	6.78
24	FRI	03.33	6.96	15.47	6.82
25	SAT	04.03	7.00	16.16	6.81
26	SUN	04.33	6.96	16.48	6.71

27	MON	05.06	6.85	17.21	6.52
28	TUE	05.40	6.69	17.54	6.31
29	WED	06.19	6.52	18.34	6.09
30	THU	07.06	6.34	19.24	5.88

MAY

1	FRI	08.05	6.15	20.30	5.70
2	SAT	09.26	6.09	22.03	5.75
3	SUN	10.48	6.33	23.26	6.12
4	MON	11.59	6.68	***	***
5	TUE	00.33	6.57	13.01	6.99
6	WED	01.28	6.93	13.55	7.17
7	THU	02.16	7.19	14.42	7.25
8	FRI	03.01	7.38	15.27	7.26
9	SAT	03.45	7.50	16.09	7.21
10	SUN	04.27	7.50	16.51	7.04
11	MON	05.10	7.32	17.31	6.75
12	TUE	05.54	6.99	18.11	6.41
13	WED	06.39	6.59	18.52	6.07
14	THU	07.30	6.20	19.40	5.78
15	FRI	08.30	5.91	20.45	5.57
16	SAT	09.40	5.79	22.08	5.55
17	SUN	10.51	5.88	23.21	5.78
18	MON	11.57	6.10	***	***
19	TUE	00.23	6.10	12.52	6.34
20	WED	01.12	6.40	13.36	6.51
21	THU	01.53	6.62	14.13	6.62
22	FRI	02.29	6.78	14.46	6.70
23	SAT	03.03	6.88	15.19	6.75
24	SUN	03.37	6.94	15.54	6.75
25	MON	04.12	6.94	16.30	6.67

* TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON

Wick	-2.29	Barry	+5.08
Lossiemouth	-2.00	Swansea	+4.42
Aberdeen	-0.18	Milford Haven	+4.37
Stonehaven	-0.08	Fishguard	+5.44
Cockenzie	+0.47	Aberystwyth	+6.11
Berwick	+0.54	Barmouth	+5.45
Blyth	+1.46	Holyhead	+3.28
North Shields	+1.47	Menai Bridge	+3.08
Hartlepool	+1.59	Colwyn Bay	+2.47
Whitby	+2.20	Southport	+2.55
Scarborough	+2.30	Blackpool	+2.50
Filey Bay	+2.45	Morecambe	+2.33
Bridlington	+2.58	Barrow (Ramsden)	+2.28
Skagness	+4.29	Whitehaven	+2.30
Hunstanton	+4.44	Kirkcudbright Bay	+2.25
Cromer	+4.56	Girvan	+5.1
Lowestoft	+4.23	Ayr	+4.44
Aldeburgh	+2.53	Lamlash	+4.45
Felbstowe pier	+2.23	Greenock	+1.19
Clacton	+2.00	Oban	+4.12
Southend-on-Sea	+2.22	Gairloch	+5.16
Herne Bay	+2.4	Ullapool	+5.36
Margate	+2.52	Belfast	+2.47
Deal	+2.38	Douglas	+2.44
Dover	+2.53		
Dungeness	+3.05	IRELAND	
Eastbourne	+2.48	Dun Laoghaire	+2.09
Newhaven	+2.47	Arklow	+4.41
Brighton	+2.51	Rosslare harbour	+4.39
Worthing	+2.36	Baginbun Head	+3.53
Portsmouth	+2.29	Ballycotton	+3.45
Ryde	+2.29	Courtmacherry	+3.32
Southampton *	+2.53	Baltimore	+3.35
Poole (Entrance) *	+3.09	Bantry	+3.15
Bournemouth *	+3.09	Ferret pier	+3.13
Swanage *	+3.19	Kilrush	+4.02
Portland	+4.57	Galway	+3.36
Torquay	+4.40	Clifden Bay	+3.41
Dartmouth	+4.25	Westport Bay	+3.57
Plymouth	+4.05	Sligo harbour	+4.25
Fowey	+3.53	Killybegs	+4.21
Falmouth	+3.30	Rathmullan	+4.43
Newquay	+3.32		
Padstow	+3.45	NORTHERN IRELAND	
Barnstaple	+4.30	Belfast	+2.47
Weston-super-Mare		Portrush	+5.48
		Red Bay	+2.41
		Carriekfergus	+2.42
Cardiff (Penarth)	+5.15		

Your at-a-glance match events planner

● = Penn Sea League



Ian 07791 234318.

● 19: Hornsea SAC lifeboat open, 10am-4pm, meet Floral Hall café, Hornsea, John Aylward 07968 215565.

● 19: Veals Summer League rnd 1 & open, Littleton, 4.30pm-8.30pm, draw 3.30pm, pegged, one rod, three hooks, no white rag or maddies, £60 league entry, best eight matches from 10, £15 entry all-in, booking required to fish as opens, Steve 0117 926 0790.

22: Deal AC (1919) Wednesday beach competition, 7pm-10pm, enter at 1919 HQ, all welcome, Pat Heath 01304 361248 or T Sudds 01304 363968.

● 25: Leinster Shore Spring/Summer League open, South Shore SAC, Roney Point, Leinster League rules, Paul Whelan 00353 (0)851425728.

● 25: Chesil League rnd 2 & open, Bexington, 5pm-10pm, £25 league entry, best eight matches from 10, booking essential, Dave Lane 07977 132951.

● 25: West Coast Shore League rnd 3 & open, to decide, Co Mayo, €25 entry, juniors free, IFSA members only, best five out of six legs, Sean Murray 00353 (0)86 3129787.

● 25-26: Holt SAC North Norfolk Bass Festival, Cley, Kelling & Salhouse, length to weight conversion, £20 a day, optional £10 pools each day, ladies event £15 per day, junior event free entry, Quads £20 per team, accommodation at Kelling Heath (01263 588181), Tony Thomas 07780 793141.

● 26: North West ASAC Personal Members open, Hall Road, Crosby, 11am-3.30pm, book on from 9.45am in car park by Coastguard Station, L23 8SY, £3.80 parking charge, two-hooks only, weight conversion, 18cm minimum, £10 all-in, Richard Burrow 07763 529509.

MAY

● 3: North West ASAC open, Rock Channel, 12.30pm-5pm, book on 10.30am-11.15am near clown sculpture, King's Parade, CH45 2PB, Heather 07572 593272.

● 3: Whitby Summer League rnd 2 of 6 & open, Saltburn pier to Filey Coble Landing, 4pm-8pm, heaviest fish match, weigh in by 8.30pm at Fleece car park, Church St, Whitby, £40 all-in for six matches, James 07773 702111.

3: Hastings & St Leonards AA early spring boat comp, 8am-5pm, 01424 430120.

● 9: Tralee Bay SAC open, Spa, 4pm-8pm, Chris O'Sullivan 00353 (0)85 1532770.

● 9: Chesil League rnd 3 & open, Abbotsbury, 5pm-10pm, £25 league entry, best eight matches from 10, booking essential, Dave Lane 07977 132951.

● 9 Asso Five Man League rnd 4 of 4 & open, Hastings & St Leonards, 11am-4pm, lug, fish and squid baits only, £50 team of five, £10 individual league (best three from four), £20 entry, NSL team qualifier, Colin Crosby 07971 252652.

BOAT FESTIVAL CHECKLIST

Here are some of the forthcoming boat events, where early booking is usually essential.

■ April 18-May 4: Whitby Charter Skippers Association Spring Festival, visit website for participating boats, www.wcsa.co.uk.

■ June 19-21: Mull of Galloway Sea Angling Festival, Port Logan & Drummore, species event, limited to 50 boats, HQ at Clashwhannon Caravan Park and Public House, mogseaanglingfestival.myfreesites.net

■ June 24-28: Westport International Sea Angling Festival, Westport, Co Mayo, shore June 24, boat June 26-28, Julie and Ray Connolly, 00353 (0)98 27297 or 00353 (0)87 7656202 or 00353 (0)87 6553704.

■ June 27-28: Mull of Galloway Sea Angling Festival kayak species hunt, mogseaanglingfestival.myfreesites.net

■ June 27-July 19: Whitby Charter Skippers Association Summer Festival, visit website for participating boats, www.wcsa.co.uk

■ July 8-10: SACGB Shark Festival, Looe, visit club website: www.sharkanglingclubofgreatbritain.org.uk

■ July 11-12: British Conger Championships, Weymouth, www.britishcongerclub.org

■ August 1-2: Mull of Galloway Sea Angling Tope Festival, HQ at Sands of Luce Caravan Park, visit: mogseaanglingfestival.myfreesites.net

■ August 10-14: EFSA European Boat & Line Class Championships, Helsingor, Denmark, enter before May 1, efsafising.org

■ August 12-14: Weymouth Conger Festival, Weymouth, contact the participating Weymouth charter boat skippers.

■ August 27-30: Baltimore Deep Sea Angling Festival, Baltimore, Co Cork, shark and ground fishing, 00353 (0)86 824 0642 or email: baltimoreseaangling@yahoo.co.uk

■ August 29-September 13: Whitby Charter Skippers Association Autumn Festival, visit website for participating boats, www.wcsa.co.uk

■ September 4-12: The 35th Rosslare Small Boats Festival, Co. Wexford, deadline for deposits was March 31, full details at rosslaresmallboatsfestival.com

■ September 6-11: British Sea Angling Festival, Looe, six days of deep sea reef fishing, £395 entry includes presentation dinner, enquires@britishseaanglingfestival.co.uk or visit www.britishseaanglingfestival.co.uk

■ September 11-18: The Cork Small Boats Festival, Cork Harbour, Anglers World Holidays 01246 221717

■ October 3-5: The 59th Dartmouth Fishing Festival, 07977 517 767 or email: contact@dartmouthfishingfestival.com

■ October 12-16: Weymouth International Boat Angling Challenge (WIBAC), Weymouth Harbour, £450 per angler, Andy Selby 01305 777771

■ November 19-20: Weymouth Pairs Species Charter Boat open, Weymouth, £175 per angler for two days boat fishing, Andy Selby 01305 777771.

Fixtures must be sent in by match organisers only and must include full details and a contact telephone number. Emails received will be acknowledged. Send events at least eight weeks in advance of the fixture to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk



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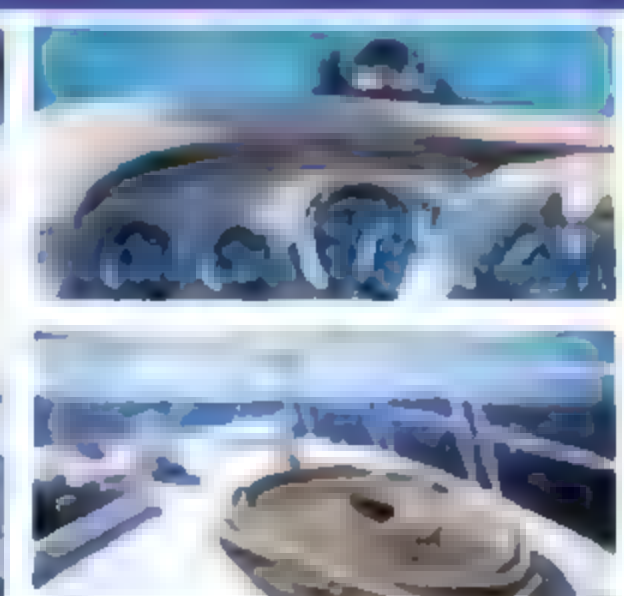
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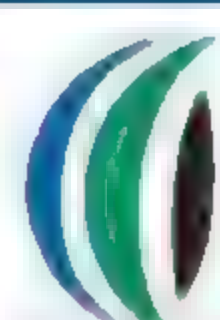
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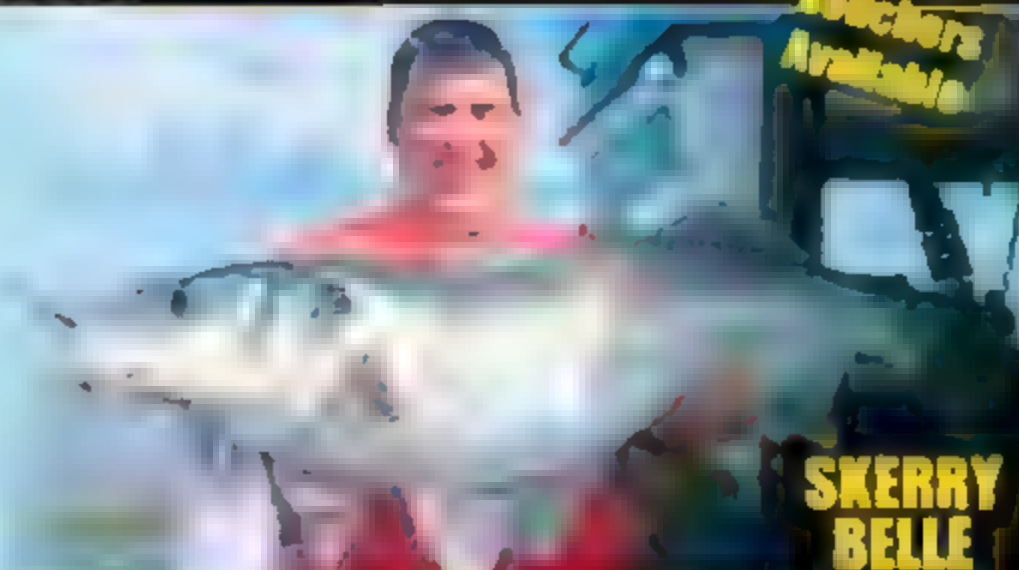
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TIME MACHINE

Looking back through 40 years of Britain's biggest and best sea angling magazine...

APRIL

2010

■ Cod weighing over 40lb each were the highlight of a UK angling group's five-day session near Trondheim, in Norway. The best fish were a 48lb 7oz cod for Nicky Robson, of Walker, and 49lb 7oz for David Roger, of Jarrow.

■ British MEP Chris Davies was leading calls for the European Parliament to push for a total ban on the controversial trade in bluefin tuna. It was hoped to take the campaign to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species.

■ Michael Johnstone's 22lb 11oz 8dr thornback ray, caught in March 2008, in the Salcombe Estuary, South Devon, was ratified as the new British shore record. The fish still tops the record list.

■ The Sea Anglers' Match Federation was on the brink of closure through lack of support. A change of qualification for the Masters had been introduced as the organisation sought to attract new members.

■ It was a tale of two Robs in the Sea Angler Penn Sea League. Somerset match angler Rob Marshall was announced as the winner of the 2009 Premier Division, with Essex's Rob Tuck second.

2000

■ Two of France's largest sea angling organisations were calling for a complete closure of the offshore bass fishery to prevent the targeting of spawning fish.

■ CEFAS had launched a tagging scheme to find out more about the annual migration of bass. The plan was to form regional tagging teams in up to 12 areas.



■ Wreck fishing for pollack was producing plenty of 20lb fish for charter boat anglers. These included a 20lb 8oz fish for Michael Gower, of Botley, Oxon, who was aboard Pat Carlin's Channel Chieftain, out of Weymouth, Dorset. Steve Humperson, of Cannock SAC, caught a 20lb 7oz pollack on Barry Lingham's Jennifer Ann of Dart, out of Dartmouth, Devon.

1990

■ Records were tumbling. Michael Jordan, of Carmarthen, was claiming a Welsh shore record for a 36lb 4oz conger eel caught at Hobb's Point, Pembrokeshire. Guernsey angler Marc Epplein caught a 5lb 1oz flounder at St Sampson's Harbour, Guernsey, beating the 3lb 13oz record.

■ Devon's Slapton Sands produced a 30lb cod for Tony Lidlard, of Plymouth, who fished a squid and lug bait on a size 2/0 hook, while Ipswich angler David Phillips caught a 24lb cod on lugworms at Landguard Point, Felixstowe. There was also a 25lb cod from Clevedon pier for Nigel Woodford, of Swindon, Wilts.

■ The sea was getting warmer. A fisheries research vessel out of Lowestoft recorded sea temperatures four degree above normal in the North Sea, six degrees higher off the Dutch coast, and eight degrees-plus in the eastern Channel.

■ A 20lb 4dr spurdog, only 1lb below the British boat record, was caught by an angler on his first boat trip. Tony Smiley, of Southampton, was on Chris Savage's Private Venture, out of Lymington, Hants.



■ Tony Kirrage, the Eastbourne tackle dealer, was the latest retailer to market a range of ready-tied beach rigs. Called Sea Match Rigs, they cost £1.50 each.

■ Bob Cox's book 'Uptiding and Boatcasting', first released in 1985, was being reprinted by Beekay Publishers.

1980

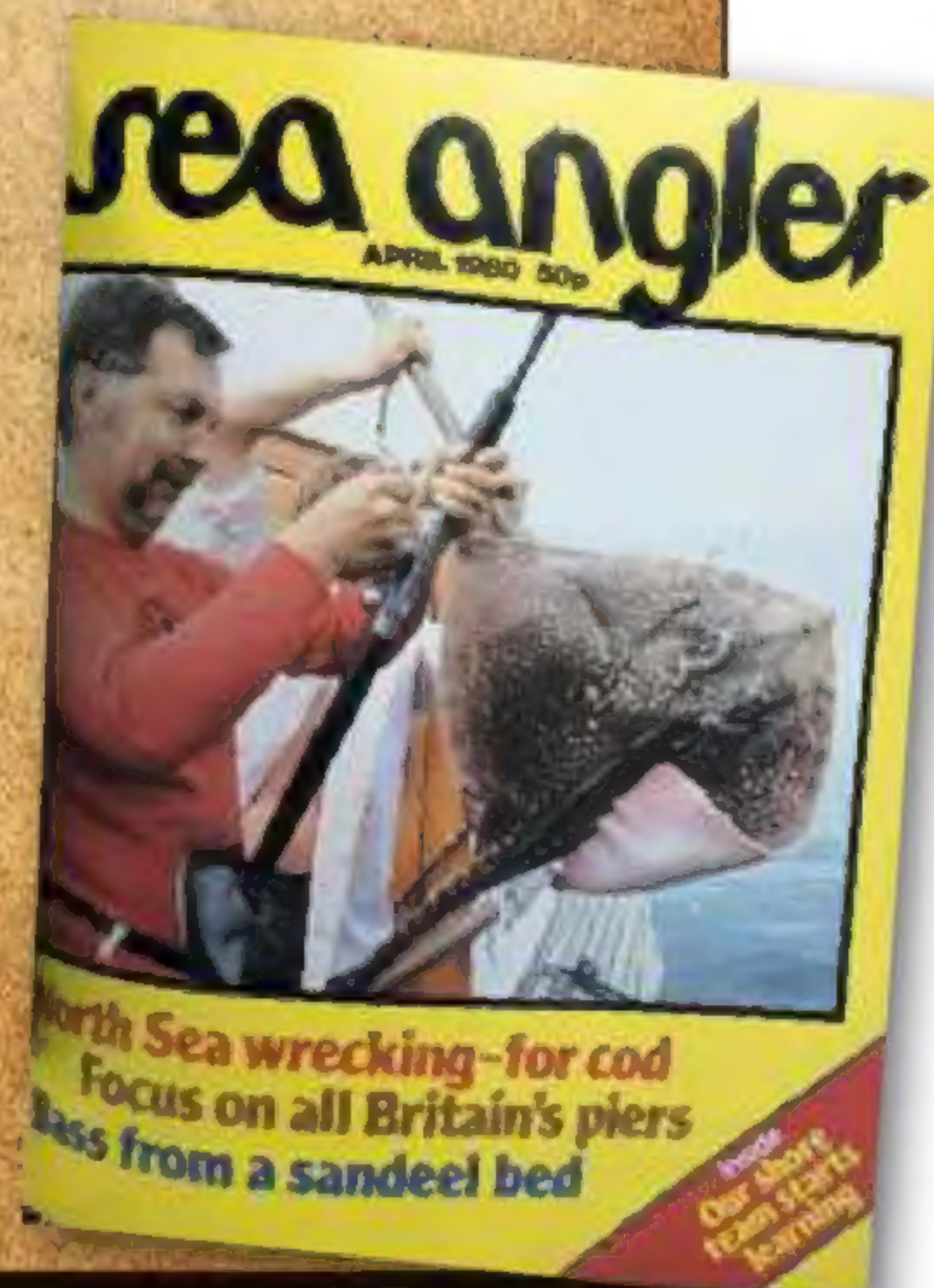
■ A young Paul Kerry, who had been named 'Caster of the Year 1979' was backing DAM reels. "In my first year in fixed-spool competition, I regular cast more than 200 yards with a standard 11½ft rod, thanks to the magnificent DAM Quick 5000," said the advert. Paul hit a cast of more than 212yd with a standard DAM Quick 500 at the 1979 British Surfcasting Championship.

■ The coalfish record, standing at 30lb 12oz since 1977, was broken by a 33lb 7oz fish landed by charter skipper Lloyd Saunders, who operated Saltwind II, out of Dartmouth, Devon. The fish took an Eddystone eel. The current record is a 37lb 5oz fish caught in 1986.

■ Gurney Grice, the principal of Grice and Young, retired at the age of 82. The company was taken over by a local business, C Y Mouldings, which planned to continue making sea fishing reels.

■ At a Fleetwood and District AC match on the River Wyre, fishing was so slow that Bob Hadgraft baited up with a Cheesy Wotsit for a laugh. Amusement turned to surprise when he landed a flounder.

■ Fish of the month was a 5lb 11oz 8dr whiting for Arthur Fearn, of Sidmouth, Devon. He caught it on a mackerel bait while fishing out of Sidmouth. Runner-up was a 32lb 8oz cod for Jack Hinchcliff, of Kirkcudbright, who was fishing at Balcary on the Solway coast.



AKIOS SHUTTLE 656 AURUM REEL



The reels have come a long way from the original reels. This limited edition version boasts a huge max drag of 17.5lb which allows it to comfortably be used for larger species such as Hounds, Rays and Huss but still being silky smooth and much more enjoyable to use than just about any other reel on the market. Holds 330yds of 15lb, 5.3:1 ratio.

GP £249.99

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£129.99

SUNSET SOLICA PRO – 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

This is our entry level 3 piece rod for the UK and is simply blows everything else away. We have focused on making this rod suitable to stand up to larger tides and swells and made sure its fitted with a more powerful tip than the average continental rod. The rod itself is still very easy to compress with a simple overhead thump. We have got our best distances using 4 and 5oz weights however it can cast larger leads when needed. We have caught Thornback rays and Smoothounds to double figures and rod coped really well. Like with all the Sunset beach rods, it features black K guides suitable for either fixed spool or multiplier with a 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, and a proper butt cap.

RRP
£199.99
GP
£129.99

SUNSET KEMICA PRO – 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

At less than 500g in weight, the Kemica pro is an ultra lightweight shore rod with a lightening quick recovery making it one of the nicest beach rods you will of ever used. In test we have been hitting over 200 yards with 4 and 5oz plain leads with an over head thump. This is achieved by using a special mix of high modulus carbons and special resins in the blank construction. We have also ensured that the rod features a powerful tip to deal with larger species and sit well in the sit well but still producing exception bite registration. We think match anglers are going to fall in love with this rod. Like with all the Sunset beach rods, it features black K guides suitable for either fixed spool or multiplier with a 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, and a proper butt cap.

RRP
£299.99
GP
£199.99

SUNSET MYTICA PRO – 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

The big daddy, flagship rod of the range needed to stand out from other rods on the market and it certainly does. We designed this rod to offer a easy casting style, good bite detection but with more power than your usual 3 piece rods so you can lump large baits and weights a long, long way. We have created this by using different carbons and resins in each section which work in perfect harmony to produce something quite special. We have hit our best distances with 6oz weights however it performs well with leads from 4 to 8oz. During test, the rod came into its own when we were having to fish large squid baits at range. The tip again has been designed to it will sit brilliantly it strong tide runs and swells. Like with all the Sunset beach rods, it features black K guides suitable for either fixed spool or multiplier with a 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, and a proper butt cap.

RRP
£399.99
GP
£299.99

BOAT RODS

SUNSET BREAKWATER BOAT RODS - 2 PIECE (EQUAL SECTION)

We have gone back to scratch when designing this rod. We wanted to produce a lightweight and responsive blank yet making it as durable as possible due to how much abuse rods normally get on the boat. After 7 different testing models we finally created the final product which is perfect. The equal section blank also features a slightly softer glass tip for bite registration and to give more control when playing larger fish on braided lines.

We have also updated the rods to be suitable to both fixed spool and multiplier reels we have noticed fixed spools becoming much more popular on boats. We have used black K guides finishing with a 10mm tip which easily allows, a swivel, clip or large knot through without interfering too much. The reel seat is fixed in an suitable position for both comfort and usability and features ergonomic grips either side. Each rod also features a durable gimbal style butt allowing it to be used in and butt pad.

The range consists of 3 models, 12-20lb, 20-30lb, 30-50lb to cover most boat angling around the UK. All rods are 7ft 6" in length.

RRP
£99.99
GP
£59.99